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ABSTRACT

Twelve papers are presented from the 1984 Hungarian-Dutch symposium on adult education and public information. Titles and authors include "The Situation of Mental Health in Hungary" (Katalin Fodor, Jozsef Gerevich); "Andragology in the Netherlands" (B. van Gent); "Needs in Local Planning for Adult Education: Experiences in the Netherlands" (Barry Hake); "The Contribution of Socio-Cultural Animation to an Innovative Society" (Laszlo Harangi); "Practices in Community Media" (Erik Kats, Folke Glastra); "On Government Information in the Netherlands" (J. Katus); "Cultural Enterprises, or New Ways of Popularizing Natural Science" (Vilmos Kiszel); "Contradictions of Socio-cultural Animation and Adult Education in Hungary" (Andor Maroti); "Adult Education and the Trade Unions" (Laszlo Maroti); "Influence of Emotions on the Planning and Decision-Making Process of Declining Organisations" (L. A. Staallekker); "Elements of Renewal in Hungarian Public Education of the Past Ten Years" (Janos Toth); and "A Village Experiment in Hungary (Siomente Experiment)" (Csaba Varga). Appendixes contain vitae of authors and a selected bibliography of Dutch and Hungarian comparative literature on adult education and public information. (YLB)

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J. Katus and J. Tóth (eds.)

# ON ADULT EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION IN HUNGARY AND THE NETHERLANDS

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*Papers of the 1984 Hungarian - Dutch symposium on adult education and public information*

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# FOREWORD

There is a centuries old tradition of cultural relations between Hungary and the Netherlands. In the period 1636-1790, for instance, at least 2.175 Hungarians studied at Dutch Universities, more than a quarter of them were students of the University of Leiden.[1]

Socio-cultural developments on both sides received more systematic attention after World War II, when - although not starting from common political viewpoints - the role of the state concerning the improvement of public welfare increased in the Netherlands as well as in Hungary. The development and implementation of socio-cultural policies required professional agents in the field and the creation of scientific knowledge with regard to the education and information of adults. There are nowadays in the two countries andragogists and andragologists working respectively in practice, doing research and academic teaching.
It is noteworthy that Hungarian and Dutch andragologists showed an early mutual interest in each others work. On the Dutch side, for example, Van Enckevort was one of the forerunners of comparative andragology in the Dutch-Hungarian context. He pointed out that a successful pursuit of comparative andragology in general greatly depends upon the knowledge about each others historical, political and cultural backgrounds, and on the use of a common terminology.[2]

Aiming at the realisation of the above conditions, close connections were established at the end of the 1970's between the

Department of Andragology of the State University of Leiden, the Budapest Institute for Culture and the Popular Culture Department of the Eötvös University Budapest.
The first phase of this connection was characterised by trying to understand each others work. As understanding progressed, the mutual interest increased. Hopefully the start of a new phase is indicated by the common symposium held in Balatonalmádi in October 1984.
Although no more can be said about this than that it was exploratory, the participants could feel nevertheless that they were making steps towards each other in a not completely unfamiliar field. Important is that plans were made for further co-operation in scientific research and education.

One of the above mentioned plans is the publication in this book of the papers presented at the symposium. The editors are aware of the fact that the materials of this book are not homogeneous. A more integrated work may, however, only be expected as the result of further and closer co-operation.

Budapest/Leiden, March 1985

J. Katus
János Tóth

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[1] Hörcsik Richárd: *Adatok a XVIII. századi protestáns peregrináció történetéhez*. Sárospatak, 1984 (kézirat).

[2] G. van Enckevort, Andragogie en andragologie in Hongarije. *Volksopvoeding*, 21 (1972), pp.46-68.

# THE SITUATION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN HUNGARY

Katalin Fodor and József Gerevich

Mental health movements are, in every society, decisively determined by historical and cultural traditions and the predominant economic-political conditions of a particular period. The cultural-political tendencies and economic difficulties of present-day Hungarian society are rather unfavourable for the development of mental health (both as a movement and a discipline).
Administrative boundaries of districts are often different from the natural boundaries of ecosystems. Resources are unevenly distributed and there are many settlements which have a rather backward infrastructure. The readiness of human institutions to innovate is minimal. Occasional 'firefighting' of partial problems taken out of their context is still the rule instead of a systematic mapping of problems of mental health and strategic intervention. The development of the supportive network does not keep pace with the needs of the society: Hungary is among the leaders in terms of the frequency of suicide, alcoholism and divorce.

We should like to outline the few promising patches that exist in this rather gloomy and sad picture of the situation, and those mostly heroic efforts in the field of mental health which provide a basis of experience for the gradual development of a modern network of mental health service.

## 1. *The Institutional System of Adult Education*

In Hungary there is since 1949 a network comprising ca 2500 institutions which could best be described as community centres employing both full-time and part-time professional staff. This system of institutions presents a basis for the pursuit of mental health activity (in terms of the number of its available rooms and the professional capacities of its staff).

There has been a change in the very conception of adult education in the past decade. This means that the 'classical' model of education which concentrated above all on art, was partially replaced by a more flexible practice in adult education that placed greater emphasis on its relevance to everyday culture, the community and the conditions prevailing in the economy and at the work-place. The attitude and practice of mental health can form an organic part of the latter framework.

In Hungary, mental health activity in adult education began in the early seventies. Research at that time showed that about 70 % of the population were interested in everyday matters, but that little attempt was made to meet those needs. That insight prompted the organisation of 'family clubs', which became the first examples of a supportive organizational form of adult education. As a consequence of that initiative, the population of the settlements involved became more sensitive to problems of mental health. Group methods began to gain ground in adult education toward the end of the seventies. Those entering the work of adult education received group training, and field work also started.

### *The Mental Health Activity Project of Komárom County*

In Komáron County a comprehensive project was started at the beginning of the eighties, relying on the work of experts of adult education well versed in group methods. The project was financed by the county council and the Institute for Culture. Activities were based on individual and group intervention. Examples of the latter were a self-acquaintance group, another group of this kind consisting of grammar school pupils, a club for diabetics, a group of children under state care, a group of marginal young people and a psychodrama group organized at a club for adolescents. Individual intervention was represented by a psychological counselling service. Group leaders received consultative assistance.

In the second half of the test period we supplemented the activities indicated in several ways. One of these was the introduction of autogenous training as a supplementary form within the framework of the diabetics club, as well as independently of organizational frameworks. New forms are the Weissian divorce seminar and the Jungian creative group which was formed mainly for members of amateur artists' groups.

The action plane outlined here were formulated in a strategic action schedule which was based around the county cultural centre.

### *Other Focal Actions*

Several other interventional activities were started below the county level under the aegis of adult education. Several clubs were formed for youth subculture groups. Adolescents from ethnic and national minority groups are also supported through clubs. There are at present five advisory services in ction in the country.

### 2. *Public Health Institutions*

The structure of our public health system centres around hospitals, so that only physicians employed in hospitals and clinics enjoy prestige. As a result a *preventive approach* falls outside the boundaries of the Hungarian health service. Free medical treatment and the existing system of sick-pay has lead to a special social stratum which is comparable in size to the masses of the unemployed in Western societies. To 'keep' these people, to look after and to support them institutionally, consumes a large share of the resources of the health services, so it cannot afford to provice the conditions that are indispensable for a modern approach to those nationwide sicknesses of the civilized world, i.e. neurosis, alcoholism, psychosomatic problems in which the statistics put Hungary among the world leaders. Another great burden for the Hungarian health services is the fact that, due to dysfunctions in the social policy network, quite a number of what originated as social problems come back as health complaints voiced in the health service, which makes the opportunity for preventive medicine even less favourable.

Health culture among the Hungarian population is far from satisfactory. The mass sport movement is in a state of crisis, and dietary information has only just started moving again after a long standstill, through the hard work of vegetarians; in addition, smoking and drinking are well-entrenched habits. Attitudes towards health and sickness have not changed since Koch's model in the 19th century, which was fatalistic in its view of illness, treating them as phenomena independent of individuals and to be tackled only by science and medical professionals.

The modernization of the health service in Hungary began in psychiatric wards. At the beginning of the seventies more and more closed mental wards opened their doors, and 'therapeutic communities' appeared which were conducted along democratic lines. In the late seventies and early eighties anti-psychiatry became established as an ideology and a few 'way-of-life' workshops emerged, following the pattern of Laingian workshops. Simultaneously, *transit institutions* (day and night sanatoriums) appeared with the purpose of limiting the harmful effects of institutions, and crisis wards were also established in accordance with the modern conception of crisis. Self-help groups to fight alcoholism were formed in close connection with the institutional network of the national health service and began to spread. They now number over seventy. Mental first-aid phone-services were set up in the 70's with Budapest and Pécs as centres and others following elsewhere in later years. Since the formation of the Hungarian Psychiatric Society (1980) different trends of psychotherapy have quickly developed. At the moment there are high level schools of *psychoanalysis*, of Rogersian *client-centred therapy*, *behaviour therapy* and *hypnosis*.

We can conclude, then, that a paradoxical situation has emerged in Hungary, in which the mental health potential has acquired strength and capabilities combined within increasingly mature professional approach, but has to exist in a worn-out and overburdened institutional structure where there is little inclination to innovate.

### 3. *Educational Institutions*

The Hungarian school system occupies the most unfavourable position in the social services. One cause of this is the system of centralized education which overleads teachers with a surplus of bureaucratic tasks and leads in the end to school syndromes like 'quasi-professionalism' and 'goal diffusion'. The other cause is connected with a wider social phenomenon: in Hungary, socializational activities, child-rearing and looking after children are treated as having *little social value*: it is not those people who spend a suitable amount of time with children, and who are committed to their care and educate them satisfactorily that society rewards. The causes of this are various, but by far the most harmful influence is the emergence of *secondary economy*, because it deprives those who otherwise could not earn a living of a culture, of social relations, of the moern ways of spending their spare-time. As a consequence, the social prestige of teachers is low and contraselection results.

In the 70's possible school reform was extensively discussed at meetings and in periodicals; interest relationships assumed a clear shape and the failure of some school reform attempts also became public. In spite of all those beneficial movements, the picture of schools in the eighties is no brighter than before and the prestige of teachers has declined further.

Mental health in schools is a recent development. The educational centre in Pécs was formed to integrate particular socializing systems with the corrective (mental health) service. This integrative co-operation serving the development of effective socialization provides a good model and a suitable framework for certain special methods of mental health to evolve.

In 1982 the School Mental Health Working Group was formed in Budapest to assess the available specialist literature on school mental health, and on the experiences both of reform attempts here and of running a mobile mental health service for schools facing mental health problems. The same team has also prepared a plan for a model experiment based on a conception of ecological mental health, which will be realized as soon as appropriate state support is made available.

## 4. *Mental Health in Factories*

We have practically no data on the mental health of employees of workshops or factories, and sociological inquiry into the field, investigations of interest relationships is workshops and factories have only just begun in Hungary. The reason why we devote a separate passage to the problem in the present brief survey, is that in the workers' hostel of a profit-making large firm (*Taurus*) a mental health service has been functioning, financed from the organization's budget to enhance the *life chances* of its employees and to express their interests to their employer. The experiment was carried out at two levels - workers and factory managers - and provided one early lesson: while the possibility of individual and group intervention can be created with relative ease, the methodology and ideology (and political power) of intervention in an organization is weak and immature.

### *Further Training Opportunities*

One of the most serious practical problems facing mental health in Hungary is the fact that there are very few mental health experts. Thus one of the key problems of the organization of the different mental health programmes is the training and retraining of those involved. A model of further training has evolved over the years which offers participants' comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge founded on ecological mental health. We would like to raise this model of further training to the level of a department and integrate it structurally with universities and higher education in general (the medical universities, faculties of arts, colleges of education, training colleges of teachers of handicapped children, etc.). This would greatly increase the intellectual resources of mental health in the country.

We are also thinking of founding an association for mental health and of establishing a national methodological centre for mental health.

# ANDRAGOLOGY IN THE NETHERLANDS

B. van Gent

## 1. *Some concepts*

Within andragological circles as well as outside them, ideas differ widely about the nature and contents of andragogic work (andragogy) and the science dealing with the study and research of such work (andragology, viz. Greek *logos* = science). This is no unexpected or alarming matter for a young specialism, the more so as it can be observed, with some malicious glee, that even within a number of established disciplines the superficial harmony is but a deceitful semblance.

### *Andragogy as welfare work*

In a way, the discussion started when Ten Have, the founder of andragology in the Netherlands, published an article in 1960 in the periodical *Volksopvoeding* (Popular Education) on social pedagogy; the text was later issued, with some modifications, in a booklet entitled *De wetenschap der sociale agogie* (The science of social agogy). In discussing the various views on social pedagogy he pointed out that where *adults* were concerned, "the work was unthinkingly given the term social *ped*-agogy", although the Greek *pais - paidos* = child. The new term 'social agogy' was used by Ten Have to mean "a general term for educating, forming, guiding, supporting a social event: social behaviour, human relations, living in groups, etc." (in compliance with the Greek *agogè* = guidance).

Some time later he suggested the term 'andragogy' to distinguish between agogic work on behalf of children and of adults respectively (Greek *anèr, andros* = adult). He considered such task-division as significant on the basis of numerous arguments; the child is on its way to adulthood and in many respects still unripe, with all the social, psychological and legal consequences attached. Such a distinction was, however, not new at all. As early as in 1833, Kapp first used in Germany the term 'Andragogik' to denote the activity meant to carry on the process begun with pedagogy.

It goes without saying that no sharp limit exists between pedagogic and andragogic work. In the real situation, there is a broad range of transition, the extent of which is, moreover, to a great measure socially determined.

In his *Klein bestek van de agologie* (Agology briefly, 1968) Ten Have did not so much indicate the differences, but rather called attention to the similarities between the work done by pedagogues and andragogues respectively: "It is work that consciously and expertly strives to improve an existing situation, at least by altering the situation to approach a direction deemed desirable".

The question arises whether agogy has the task of dealing with changes alone: we could think of agogy with the task of maintaining what is regarded as good. But irrespective of this, it does not seem too prudent to work on the necessarily abstract level of 'agogy'. Such a course would do no justice either to the pedagogic or to the andragogic component. The term 'change' - quite apart from other objections - has such a broad context, that the typical traits specific of andragogic or pedagogic work are not easily discerned.

Many authors, among whom Ten Have, have indeed repeatedly pointed out that fields like *social work* and *cultural work* should come under the central realm of andragogy. These two types of work can also be regarded as the two poles of an entity of activities dealing with *assistance* to and *forming* of adults, such as the program was realized after the second world war in the frame of the pursuit of greater *well-being* in the Netherlands. Be it under various names, the combination of social and cultural work can even be traced back to times since the second half of the 19th century in the Netherlands. In this light, it seems preferable to define andragogy in general as work for *social and cultural well-being* ('welfare work').

### *Aspects of andragology*

Andragology, being the science of the work for social and cultural welfare covers a specific field of social problems as the object of its scrutiny. In this respect it may be compared with disciplines like sciences dealing with environment or industrial management or like politicology, which also have certain social or institutional problem fields as their targets. These relatively new disciplines can be regarded as multi- or interdisciplinary sciences; for solving their problems, each one of them makes use of knowledge derived from 'basic sciences'.

No science is, however, autonomous. Each limit and division of tasks is a matter of tradition or agreement. Andragogic action is social action; the science studying such action is part of the social sciences. In this field, we can distinguish between three sorts of sciences. First, disciplines like psychology and sociology which deal with the study of behaviour and society in a general sense. Next, for example, social psychology which deals with the area linking between psychology and sociology. Finally a science like andragology which integrates the knowledge deriving from other disciplines with a view to a specific complex of problems.

As the problems connected with the type of activity denoted by andragogy had not been studied before by the then existing scientific disciplines, or if so, then only with regard to some specific aspects of those problems, there was an opening for andragology. Just when - through a combination of already tested forms of acquiring knowledge - the total yields more than a collection of loose parts, such an operation makes sense and it is worth while. This can be accomplished by switching from a multidisciplinary gathering of knowledge - where the basic sciences still function rather loosely from one another - to an interdisciplinary science, with a more integrated approach.

A complication is that also the object of the new discipline has to do with an integration problem. Social and cultural welfare work is no homogeneous entity of coherent activities, but rather a conglomerate of various kinds of work, each with their own history and a distinct pursuit, while within the separate kinds of work numerous differentiations have developed.

At the same time - as among others it is seen in the history of the discipline - there is no question of watertight compartments, and for a long time, for practical purposes, there has been a tendency to avoid all unnecessary limits. It is therefore evident that with a view to the prevailing situation, two strategies are followed.

*General* andragology forms as it were a master science encompassing the entire field of social and cultural welfare work. Next, within the frame of a *special* andragology primary attention is paid to the study and research of the individual types of work. This has also the advantage that it is easier to keep in contact with developments in other countries where they concentrate on the study of specific types of work or where - usually on historic grounds - they have come to a different combination of activities. General andragology starts out from the abstract problem fields, whereas for a special andragology theorization concerning a definite field of practice takes the foreground.

Within these two forms of scientific practice, it has become customary to discriminate some cores, whereby it is always a different aspect of the andragological activity that is accentuated. Distinction is made between theoretical, empirical and practical andragology, in both the general and the special sense.

In *theoretical* andragology, the accent lies on developing theories which may or may not be suitable for empirical tests. In this category we find *historical* andragology that studies, among other things, the history of the andragogic work and of andragology. Under theoretical andragology comes also *philosophical* andragology which deals with various parts of philosophy and their meaning for the theory and practice of the social and cultural welfare programs. Finally, under theoretical andragology is mostly also classed *comparative* andragology which examines, in how far the state of affairs in foreign countries compares with the Dutch situation.

The second core, *empirical* andragology deals mainly with social research with special emphasis on andragogic problems. Making use of a wealth of methods and techniques, phenomena are described and hypotheses are tested against empirical reality.

Finally, we have *practical* andragology, where interest is focussed on andragogic action. Not unlike pedagogy, various systems have been developed for practical activities. Moreover, such action is always deployed in a social context, so that at the same time the policy aspects of social and cultural well-being work are also dealt with.

## 2. *Development of andragology*

Though the magazine ***Maatschappelijk Werk*** (Social Work), published since 1899, had coined the name 'social engineer' for senior offical active in relief of the poor and popular education, it took a long time for these fields to be adopted as legitimate subjects for a specially established scientific curriculum and research.

Nevertheless, it must be stated that the Netherlands had a pioneering role as far as professional training for social and cultural work is concerned. The problems grew beyond the control of the patriarchal benevolence and well-meaning charity to such extent, that as the liberal democrat Kerdijk put it "in order to meet the requirements, it is indispensable for social work to be efficiently and seriously prepared; such preparation must have in part a scientific character, because what mattters are general sociological knowledge and familiarity with the pertinent legislation, and the examination of various problems in a historical context".

### *From occupation to profession*

De *Opleidingsinrichting voor Socialen Arbeid* (Training Establishment for Social Work) in Amsterdam began its activity in 1899, and was thus the first school in the world of its kind. When after the railway strike in 1903 hardly any pupils applied, the name was promptly altered: the word 'social' provoked all too ready associations with the dreaded socialism. Thereafter the name preferred was *School voor Maatschappelijk Werk* (School for Public Assistance). Apart from the fear of a political revolution, some were afraid that the school would drive its exclusively female pupils "into the arms of an ultra-feminism"; moreover it was uncertain whether or not social work would provide the pupils with the means to earn a decent living.

In contrast to the present-day use of the term, in the Netherlands the notion 'social work' at first not only meant assistance, but also popular education. The School for Social Work was ever since its foundation engaged in the entire gammut of the activities that are now called andragogic. For the development of what later became andragology, this circumstance has had a meaning not to be underestimated.

Still, as time went by, the accents were shifted. When in 1915, Emily Knappert left the *Volkshuis* (Folk House) at Leiden to assume direction of the School in Amsterdam, the promotion of the cultural development of the people stood in the foreground. After 1926, when she was replaced by Moltzer, the character of the training was changed in a way, and the accent on social work became more like what it is today. Moltzer was primarily concerned with social need: certainly, in the economic crisis of the 1930's there was no great interest in cultural education, valuable as it may have been.

The new director introduced another shift in emphasis: training was more clearly directed towards a specific kind of work. Social sciences were more intensely applied in the training. The introduction to a volume of essays - dedicated in 1930 to Emily Knappert on her seventieth birthday - entitled ***Maatschappelijk Werk*** - formulated this tendency as follows: "social and cultural improvement can increasingly not do without scientific help". The occupation grew in to a profession.

When an occupation becomes a profession, the process is pre-eminently characterized by the circumstance that the knowledge required is complex and extensive and can only be mastered after thorough training. The quality of the service must be outstanding and must display a high degree of technical know-how. The first thought that comes to mind in this connection is building up an own pool of ***scientific knowledge*** fit to serve as material for study at an institute for higher education.

The process of professionalization does, however, not only derive from the sheer ambition of groups of professionals seeking recognition and improvement of their standing. It should always be seen against the background of social developments. An industrial society needs experts "to act as guides in our civilized jungle".

Although in the Netherlands before the second world war four schools had been set up for social work, the approach to the social problems, and certainly also the cultural ones, on a scientific basis was still in its infancy. The roster of the Training Establishment for Social Work already included 'social' sciences; nevertheless they played a fairly modest role.

The same as abroad, in the Netherlands social and cultural work sought a science of its own on the road towards becoming a profession. This was found in social pedagogy, a then upward coming discipline.

### *The dilemma of social pedagogy*

The name 'Social-Pädagogik' was first used by Diesterweg in 1835, two years after Kapp had introduced the name 'Andragogik'. Unfortunately, Diesterweg never specified what the new name should mean.

The first attempt to systematically deliberate over social pedagogy was undertaken by Natorp round the turn of the century. He denounced the individual character of contemporary education; he claimed that a human being only came of age in a community. In this, he shared the notion of the sociologist Tönnies among others, who introduced the difference between a community of organic life and the society as a mechanical construction. Strong communal sense was needed to fight individual egoism and collective class-consciousness. Natorp did not regard social pedagogy as a component of pedagogy, but simply as education as such. The education of children and adults had to contribute to making an end to the fatal split of the German nation.

The collectivist trend in German social pedagogy - as education by the state for the state - reached a horrible low point during the Hitler régime. After the first world war there arose, however, another 'social pedagogic movement' of entirely different character, aiming specially at youth. It was not the neglected youth that was a menace to the community, but the other way round: youth had to be protected against society. From this angle, social pedagogy was a distinct component of education, a field with a task of its own. An early form of "youth welfare work became the first program of social pedagogy".

In the Netherlands, social pedagogy was barely theorized before the second world war in spite of the fact that in 1919, in his inaugural address as extraordinary professor of pedagogy on behalf of the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* (Society for Public Welfare), Kohnstamm discussed the work of Natorp. He took a stand against it as 'state pedagogy' and gave preference to 'individual pedagogy'. His colleague Casimir in Leiden adopted in the same year a far less distinct standpoint: "through the institution of popular high-schools, university extension classes and such-like, through the introduction of refresher courses, one wants to extend education far beyond school-leaving age". With rare exceptions there existed, however, no official relations between the scientific study of such social pedagogic work and the Dutch universities. One such exception was the Social Pedagogic Institute of the State University of Groningen, established in 1920 out of the legacy of the modernist liberal standard-bearer Bos, who provided that the funds be used "for undertaking and supporting social pedagogic work to promote the free development of the people in the widest sense of the word". The institute had its seat at the building of the university, under the directorship of Brugmans, at the time lecturer in pedagogy. For Ten Have, the later andragologue, this was the first acquintaince with social pedagogy; for years, he worked as an assistant at the Bos Foundation.

At that time, social pedagogy was still in two minds. On one hand, it dealt with a conceptually determined general 'Bildungsideal', such as the forming of man to become a communal being, on the other hand it was active in a field of special pedagogic tasks necessary for coping with the problems of modern society. In the context of the latter concept, the Bos Foundation undertook to cover a more extensive range of work. It organized lectures on popular education for the unemployed, public mental health and public education under government responsibility. After the second world war, a certain integration of ideas came about. The specialized tasks were more and more precisely formulated, but the community idea distinctly prevailed as undertone.

### *Social pedagogy in academic setting*

Social pedagogy as a university discipline got its first chance to develop in the Netherlands after the liberation from German occupation, with the advent of the modern *welfare state*. Based upon the model of Beveridge, architect of the British welfare state, the Dutch government in exile in London instituted in 1943 a commission for the benefit of the social security "of all members of the population": the professors Posthumus and Romein laid down the basis for its scientific support.

Their layout for a new Politico-Social Faculty at the University of the City of Amsterdam was not only meant for the training of public servants, diplomats and journalists, but also foresaw the expected growth of post-war society "which, among other things, was associated with a strong increase of social care". On the instigation of Professor Kohnstamm the plans for this 'seventh faculty' included also a section C, earmarked for the study of social psychology and social pedagogy.

According to the explanation given to the recommendation of the mayor and aldermen of Amsterdam dated 5 July 1946, this section was to be installed "for the sake of forming persons in leading functions requiring wide psychological and pedagogic knowledge insofar as the study of social problems makes this necessary".

While the scheme of such training was only in draft, differences of opinion came to the fore which largely defined the subsequent development of andragology.

De Jongh, successor of Moltzer as director of the Amsterdam School for Social Work, advocated close contact with practical work; in his plan, the new section C had to depart from the various sorts of work and the pertaining problems which have a focal position in socio-pedagogic professional training. Actually, these plans were conceived as post-graduate training for older persons with professional experience.

These views fitted completely into the line set out by Kohnstamm from the first. Such pragmatic approach was also approved in the comments of the then minister of Social Affairs, who - according to the motion of the Amsterdam mayor and aldermen - had advised "to welcome the institution of curricula that would train the staff needed for diverse functions at his department or the services resorting thereunder".

The rising welfare state needed a scientifically trained staff, the schools for social work, in answer to the need, manifested their demand for "scientific study and the training of experts".

The university, however, gave preference to the blueprint of Ten Have who had meanwhile left Groningen and worked in Amsterdam as external university lecturer and assistant to Professor Révész of psychology. According to his plan, and in agreement with the views of his teacher at Groningen, Heymans, "scientific notions and the components concerned with the emergence of problems" had to be subjected to study. The problems connected with socio-pedagogic practice as such would have their turn much later.

In 1950, Ten Have was appointed professor of 'the foundations of social pedagogy'. By his nomination, however, the new university training only partially met the requirements of social and cultural work, and in its early period the young academic discipline developed without having much relation with social reality. Consequently, following the inaugural address of Ten Have, the students protested for fear of having too little contact with their subsequent professional work but without success.

Social pedagogy - or 'social agology' as Ten Have named it when the training in Amsterdam chose to study the work with adults - was sometimes broadly defined as a science of planned change. It was, however, in no way clear in which field, and with what input of its own, the new discipline could contribute to these change. In this manner, social agology became a barrel full of unfulfilled wishes and an easy target for the mockery of well-established disciplines.

Although the views were often very general, yet the theoretic contact with the specific fields of work was not entirely lost. In an article published in 1956 in *Volksopvoeding* (Public Education) Van Gelder included cultural work and social work among the "techniques of social pedagogy". In the same issue of this periodical Van Praag published a few marginal comments on Van Gelder's notions. In a footnote he remarked that the term 'pedagogic' was a moot one; "agogic is far more correct, possibly andragogy as equivalent for the education or forming of adults".

But also in practice, the ties with the socio-pedagogic professional field were maintained. In a folder published in 1960, for the ten years' jubilee of the Amsterdam Socio-Pedagogic Institute, a roster was given of the functions filled by the first group of graduates. Social work, child welfare, community work, socio-cultural work and "socio-pedagogic work in personnel departments of business firms, services, establishments" were mentioned as jobs were socio-pedagogues in practical fields earned their living.

These professionals were needed all the more as the rest of voluntary forces for unpaid and, through red tape, complicated work diminished. Increasing prosperity presented many other outlets for leisure occupations; besides, despite the existing denominational segregation in the Netherlands, the emotional binding with religious and non-church organizations in the socio-pedagogic field had greatly withered.

Due among other things to this trend in socio-pedagogic practice, within social pedagogy - or as it was later also called, social agology -there arose a process of splitting and greater independence. Genuine *'social pedagogy' with its fields of work as child* care and clubhouse activities, was transferred to the aegis of the pedagogic sciences. In 1966, the trustees of the University of Amsterdam passed a resolution to introduce a study of andragogic science next to the existing study of pedagogic sciences. Section C was abolished and the assignment of Ten Have was modified to lecturing in the science of andragogy.

### *Andragology as discipline*

As is probably the case with all other sciences in an early phase of their development, in finding its way andragology received impulses from various sides, without possessing a clearly defined image to face them.

Gradually, a process came under way to reconcile the initially more or less contrasting standpoints. The vague outlines of an own identity began to appear. The decision emerged to follow the line fostered by the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work since its establishment in 1965, and to study social and cultural welfare work; this was actually a continuation of the program of the Training Establishment for Social Work ever since 1899. In this approach there was no room for abstract theorization without relation with definite social problem fields, nor for a mainly 'theory-adverse' concern with daily practical problems only.

Also Ten Have seemed - despite a respectable preference for theoretical uplands - now and then inclined to descend to the lowlands of andragogic work, such as they had developed since the end of the past century at different speeds, but in unmistakable conjunction. He thought it necessary "to help the science of the non-therapeutic welfare work and the pertinent policy making to gain ground and to see to it that optimally prepared graduates were trained to further build up this science and to scientifically support practical agogic work". In this context he descerned "a definite analogy between the study of the agogic and of the medical sciences" with the difference that the latter had already conquered their place.

True to its mandate from 1947, but far more distinctly than before, andragology was developing a profile as a science covering a specific social problem field. During the process, Ten Have's psychologically tinted views on influencing individuals and small groups were enriched with interest for institutional and macro-structural aspects on a sociological basis.

The *Nota van toelichting* (Information notes) to the Royal Decree of november 1970, wherein the admission of the science of andragogy to the roster of universities in the whole country was regulated by including it in the Academic Statute, correctly pointed out the role of professional training schools that "had with increasing earnest pleaded for scientific education and research needed to support their work". In the notes to the individual articles, connection between the practical fields of social and cultural welfare work is laid down explicitly. As specific components of it are listed: the "social and cultural education of adults including information, social support of adults in work situations, social and cultural support of adults engaged in community work, and social assistance to adults".

## 3. *Andragology in Leiden*

### *Tuition in andragology*

The teaching of andragology is the task of the Department of the Pedagogic and Andragogic Sciences of the State University of Leiden. Together with the Departments of Psychology, Sociology and Cultural Antropology, they make up the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Each department consists of a number of (sub)departments, which are the basic units for teaching and research and are generally formed around the subject matter dealt with by a professor. The Department of Andragology is such a basic unit.

The training for a doctorate in andragology consists of two parts. The first year's course (prelim) is set up jointly by the various Departments of Pedagogy and the Department of Andragology. The program of the ensuing three years, while the student works for a degree, is for the major part provided for by the Department of Andragology alone.

In general outline, the program for the doctorate in andragology is made up of andragology as major subject and two minor subjects that may be chosen by the student according to his specific interest. The first year is the same for all students; in the second and third year the students may chose freely among the different specialisms, with emphasis on their envisaged professional practice.

In the first doctoral year, general component parts of the subject are treated, such as theoretical andragology, empirical andragology and practical andragology, and specific components, like (at Leiden) the science of adult education and of information. After this general year, the student must choose among a number of subjects offered by the Department of Andragology, and a large number of minor subjects treated within and outside the Faculty of Social Sciences.

In the third year, there is room for practical experience. The students have to work on probation at some institution in the field of social and cultural welfare work (especially adult education and information) either in practical or research work. Beside this third year's students must write a paper giving an integrated picture of all components of their study up to then. The student may determine the subject of his paper according to his own choice and professional interest.

As mentioned above, general andragology is concerned with the formulation of an overall theory and research with regard to social and cultural welfare work. Within this general andragology, *theoretical andragology* mainly handles the historic, philosophic and comparative aspects of welfare work (andragogy) and science (andragology). The tuition first deals with the history of andragogic work and the welfare state, the tendencies and systems that have put their stamp on it, and the history of the science of andragogy - short as it may yet be. Next, the theoretical, anthropological, social-philosophical and ethical aspects are treated. Finally a comparative study is made of the state of 'welfare work', 'welfare state' and 'science', describing the similarities and differences among them abroad and in the Netherlands.

Tuition in *empirical andragology* aims, among other things, at giving an integrated picture of the research process as a whole, and furthermore at the acquisition of insight into the specific problems of andragological research (see also there). Great importance is attached to the relation of research to action in practical andragogic situations. In this context much attention is given to various forms of behaviour and action research that have been developed within the framework of andragology.

The last component of general andragology is *practical andragology*. Tuition in Leiden in this field is concentrated on three aspects. Much attention is given to andragogic stratagems and the underlying theories, such as 'planned change' and social technology. Among other matters, rational-empirical, re-educative-normative and power strategies are treated. Besides, by means of study of the literature, workshops and participation in practical work the students have the opportunity to get acquainted with two forms of andragogic intervention and acquire skill in them, namely counseling and group work. Finally, closer scrutiny is given to the process of policy-making in general, with particular view to welfare work, and to the role of the andragologue as policy maker or executor.

Prompted by the authorities, for some time the field of social and cultural education as a specific component of welfare work, together with the schooling of adults has been comprised under the notion of *adult education*. Owing to the strong interest of women desirous to make up for deficient education at various levels, ranging from *Moeder-Mavo* (Mothers-Highschool) to Open University, and to the greatly increased call for by-schooling and refresher courses, the need for which became topical as a result of unemployment, this component of special andragology enjoys a great deal of attention. In this context, the need for educational facilities for the benefit of ethnical minorities should not be overlooked. Until recently, close scientific and personal relations existed in this respect with the licenciate teaching of the Department of Agology of the University of Surinam. Following the tradition of the Department of Andragology at Leiden, theory as well as practice of adult education are heavily accentuated.

Secondly, Leiden occupies a unique position with regard to the study of *information*, this being another component of special andragology that has the particular attention of the department. Apart from the Agrarian University at Wageningen and the State University Limburg, the subject of information is only taught at Leiden. At Wageningen, there is a sub-group for information, naturally heavily emphasizing information on agricultural topics. Moreover, the subject is treated specifically in relation to sociology, for andragology is not included in the curriculum. The latter applies also the State University Limburg, where there is only interest in health information as a potential minor subject. Against this, the Department of Andragology at Leiden has a considerable array of educational facilities where public information and scientific information are in the foreground.

Along with the above outlined courses, the department provides ample training in *minor subjects*. According to the specific wishes of the students concerned, they may choose among combinations of subjects among which the three aspects of general andragology and the two different types of special andragology may be included.

Finally, the department deals with the preparation and giving of *post-graduate* training. This is done on a country-wide scale, among others in the framework of the Commission for the preparation of post-graduate training in public relations and information, and of the Bureau of post-graduate tuition of the NVO, Netherlands Association of Pedagogues, Educational Experts and Andragologues.

*Andragological research*

The research policy of the Department of Andragology endeavours to bring about the integration of the various research projects under an overall research program entitled: The problem of co-ordination in social and cultural welfare work. The problems concern the relation and tension between the activities offered in the field of social and cultural welfare work on one hand, and the demand for such services by the targeted consumer group on the other hand.

The relation between provision and demand, between the system of clients and the andragogic system forms a key topic of andragology. Subjects for discussion here are, among others: supporting functions, activating, combating dropout and absenteeism, information, in short all activities that aim to support the educational process.

As a matter of some importance it should be noted that the abovementioned information work is an important factor in other andragogic work, quite apart from the fact that it is an independent sort of work. As said above, it is only at the State University of Leiden where andragological research of information is explicitly done.

Various research projects that have been carried out at the Department of Andragology have dealt - and still deal - with the problem of co-ordination in *adult education*. In the first instance, the research approached the problem from the *side of the client*, studying symptoms on the *'demand side'*. The phenomena studied were educational motivation and orientation, participation, dropout and absenteeism, etc. It appeared, however, that description and explanation of these aspects provided an insufficient basis to tackle the problem of co-ordination.
For this reason, the process during the *interaction between the andragogic system* and the *client system* came more into the limelight. Research was focussed on interventions in that process, namely on the activating strategies applied, such as information, 'active guidance' and educative community work.

The interaction process between the andragogic system and the client system has also a central place in current projects in the field of *information*, in this case of public information and dental health information and education. In a welfare state, the government interferes increasingly in the practice of andragogic work by means of public information. In the first-named project the role of intermediary cadres in the process is examined. The second project deals with the interaction among sources, propagators and users of dental health information and education.

Two other projects concern the *didactic methods* of offering services and the procedures applied thereby. The respective study now under way concerns in the first place "institution-directed stimulation of expert knowledge in adult education".

In the framework of education, information and similar matters, *audiovisual programs* are more and more often used. This manner of offering services is being studied in a second project for examining the development, structure and functioning of such audiovisual programs.

In the various research projects, more and more emphasis is placed upon the *social framework of the co-ordination problems*. Some aspects hereof are: the social situation of (hard to reach) target groups, the development of programs in specific social situations (e.g. neighbourhood education), discussion over the social and political function of welfare work and the manner in which it functions in social problem situations. This compels one to a more integral approach of the co-ordination problems and the social setting concerned. This approach is handled in a current research inquiring into the role of social movements in shaping the educative system.

In the field of information, the projected policy of the department provides, alongside the projects discussed above, another one in the field of *science information*. It is the successor to an earlier project studied at the department concerning the historical development of science information in the Netherlands.

A basic point in the research policy of the department is that all projects must contribute to the *general andragological theoretisation*. Research in this field fulfils an integrative function. On one hand, attention is paid to developments in the field of andragogic work and science in the Netherlands, on the other hand research is done in comparative andragology. By studying events in social and cultural welfare work abroad, greater insight can be gained into the significance of the social setting for this work. In the field of comparative andragology, the department followed developments in both andragogy and andragology in England and in Hungary.

Note:
The text of paragraphs 1 and 2 derives from: B. van Gent, *Over andragologie* (On andragology), Boom, Meppel/Amsterdam, 1982; the text of paragraph 3 from: B. van Gent and J. Katus (eds.), *Andragologie te Leiden* (Andragology at Leiden), State University of Leiden, 1983.

# NEEDS IN LOCAL PLANNING FOR ADULT EDUCATION: EXPERIENCES IN THE NETHERLANDS

Barry Hake

### *Introduction*

The concept of need has been widely employed in the Netherlands to argue for major changes in the legislation governing procedures for policy-making and local democratic planning in the welfare field. Fargoing changes have been consequently implemented which are intended to produce a more effective needs-meeting capacity of the social welfare services. The situation can be briefly sketched as follows.

The on-going reorganisation of adult education and planning at the local level is closely associated historically with a broader ranging reform of the organizational infrasructure of the welfare services in the Netherlands. The reorganisation of these services, covering adult and community education, recreational services, and social and community work, can be traced to a number of policy documents prepared in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The most important of these was produced by an advisory committee set up to advise on the harmonization of welfare policy and legislation. Their report (Problems of Welfare, 1974) gave rise to a long drawn-out public debate on welfare policy and planning, and resulted in new legislation. The proposals of the 1974 report are significant in that they were intended to achieve a more effective response by welfare services to the needs of the population. Its key proposals were based on five generic principles for the reorganisation of the welfare services in general and adult education in particular. These principles were:

- improved co-ordination of the different services;
- reducing access barriers to the services;
- enhancing the democratic control of services;
- greater flexibility to new needs;
- increasing the rights of service-users.

The proposed means to these ends were the decentralisation of policy to the local authorities, and the creation of procedures for democratic planning of services at the local level. The resulting legislation instituted complex procedures for local planning including a compulsory needs-assessment procedure and consultation of the population. During the build-up period regulations for the local planning of adult and community education were gradually introduced. New planning regulations were announced in 1976 and these became operational in 1977. The regulations were extended to the broader area of social-cultural activities in 1979, and were to be eventually harmonized under the definitive legislation for the entire welfare field. Under the planning regulations the local authorities are required to produce four-year plans and an annual programme of activities. To this end the authorities are required to undertake an assessment of existing service provision, and an assessment of the needs of the population. Such assessments were intended to provide a data-base upon which decisions could be made to achieve a better match between the needs of the population and the structure of service provision. These tasks of assessing provision and need in the area of welfare were new to local authorities, and the growth of their welfare departments to implement the planning procedures has been significant.

Given that the reorganisation of the provision of adult education in the Dutch context should proceed, at least partly, on the basis of needs-assessment at the local authority level, it would seem appropriate to turn to the methods of needs-assessment which have been developed by local authorities in the Netherlands.

## 2. *Needs-assessment and the Data-base for Planning*

The area of research in adult education, especially in its more applied variant, has been increasingly characterized by a concern with needs-research and methods of needs-analysis. Research into educational needs has become an important data-base in decision-making and educational planning. As Cross (1980) argues for the United States:

> *" ... needs assessments were undertaken in the expectation that they could serve as planning documents, that is, they would provide an information base from which decisions could be made".*

In this formulation needs-research belongs to the category of so-called "data-based" strategies of social intervention which employ

> *" ... scientific procedures in order to collect data which will provide policy-makers with a rational, scientific basis for decision-making and problem-solving"* (Hornstein et al., 1970).

The adult education literature indicates an increasing concern with techniques to conduct needs-research and needs-assessment. Cross (1978) and Pennington (1980) present statements about the current 'state of the art' for adult education. Smith (1980) provides a critical overview for social welfare provision as a whole. Needs research turns on appropriate methods for assessing not only existing needs for services, but also levels of future needs and the resources required to meet those needs.

The intention of needs assessment procedures in the Netherlands, as elsewhere, is to provide a reliable data-base as the foundation of social planning. As the Dutch Association of Local Authorities formulates the position:

> *"In the context of planning the issue is to detect imbalances in the relationships between needs and provisions. The evaluation of the existing provision in the light of what is needed is vitally important"* (Guide, 1976).

As Knox (1979) summarizes the international literature on needs assessment in adult education:

> *"Proficient practitioners use somewhat more formal procedures for needs assessment, which entail use of several methods of obtaining information about educational needs. The types of information include: expressed preferences by potential participants, demonstrated willingness to respond to the programmes when offered, conclusions by experts regarding educational needs of a category of adults, evidence of those affected by the proficiency level of a category of adults, and proficienty as compared with similar adults".*

However, little experience or expertise in assessment techniques were available to those appointed to new welfare planning posts in the Netherlands, and it should not be surprising that the problems of assessing such an ill-defined entity as 'need' have become a major preoccupation in local planning practice. The regulations governing the local welfare planning suggest that for

> *" ... such assessments a number of methods are available: surveys, interviews, hearings, and analysis of secondary data"* (Regulations, 1978).

In a guide compiled by the Netherlands Association of Local Authorities similar approaches to needs assessment in adult education are outlined (Guide, 1976). More specifically this guide for local planners suggests that needs assessment should be directed to the assessment of subjective and objective needs. A similar guide has been prepared for the wider planning area now involved in welfare planning by the local authorities. These guides have become the bibles of local planners as Strik (1982) has reported. The 'how to do it' problem of needs-assessment has consequently concentrated upon procedures for assessing respectively subjective and objective needs. Diverse practices have been developed but a number of assessment procedures to form the standard repertoire of local planners.

A further examination of the main approaches to needs assessment in the Netherlands should direct attention to how the concept of need is employed in this kind of applied social research. Two questions can then be asked:

- what notion of need is being employed in needs assessment?
- what relationship is there between the notion of need and the data collection strategies?

This suggests that we need to look more closely at the notions of need which have been worked out in the practice of needs research in local planning procedures.

### *Assessing Subjective Needs*

A first step in assessing subjective needs among the adult population can involve gathering information about the *prevailing levels of demand*, for existing services. This can provide a measure of expressed demand for services or "felt need as turned into action" as Bradshaw (1972) defines it. However, expressed demand cannot always be satisfied due to the shortage of resources available to providing agencies. This suggests an indirect measure of "unmet" subjective needs, which can be assessed by looking at the waiting lists for educational activities maintained by the agencies. The total of expressed demand can be then regarded as the sum of met and unmet expressed needs, and provides an almost direct indication of the required expansion of resources to allow agencies to meet this unmet demand. Such measures of expressed need and especially the use of waiting-lists as an indication of unmet demand are widely employed in the social welfare field (Smith, 1980). At the same time such assessments of needs are the easiest to obtain and the most inadequate. Waiting-lists of specific institutions may include persons who have already found a place by another agency or have effectively withdrawn their demand in the meantime. Furthermore, any one individual may be registered on the waiting-list of a number of agencies. Agencies also have the habit of "saving-up" potential clients until they have a large enough group to warrant subsidy from the local authorities when minimal class numbers are required. Other agencies may be closing down courses which fall below these minimum numbers. On the whole it could be argued that waiting-lists of individual agencies when totted-up provide an inflated assessment of the potential unmet expressed need in the local authority area.

A second step would be to assess the *felt need, wants or preferences* of the adult population. These are the subjective needs which are not always expressed as demand, as Bradshaw (1972) defines "felt need". In the Netherlands assessments of such needs are carried out with a surprising range of methodological ingenuity. It is not unknown for brief questionnaires to be placed in local newspapers. Readers can be requested, for example, to indicate four priorities for educational activities. Questionnaires are also sometimes distributed through the various public agencies which provide adult education or other social welfare services. Given the highly selective nature of response to such approaches to the population, it is sometimes decided to undertake a sample survey among the adult population. The sample may or may not be drawn from both those using and those not using existing agencies. The questionnaire or interview protocols may include questions about needs for existing forms of services, and in some cases will also cover felt needs for services which do not at present exist.

While drawing variously on standard techniques for survey research, and especially marketing research, a number of problems arise with regard to this common approach to needs assessment. Bokma and Doerbecker (1977) argue, for the Dutch situation, that the often heard plea for reliable and valid assessment of subjective needs ignores a number of essential problems concerned with the marketing research approach to assessing subjective needs for educational products. They point out that even given the most positive conditions for a sample survey - which are not normally met in practice - most adults are very bad predictors of their future educational behaviour *i.e.* consumption. Many adults appear to express felt wants for specific courses under survey conditions, but do not turn up on enrolment night, while others who express no consumer preference do turn up. Some express interest in course A but enrol for course B, while potential A and B course students turn up at course C or D, etc. They point out, furthermore, that the market for educational products is not to be compared with the market for consumer goods. The potential consumer of education is not easily able to estimate the benefits of participation in a specific course of educational activity, and these benefits are not always clearly formulated by the providing agencies. Educational consumption is not to be regarded as the decision 'to buy' a specific course in preference to others, as is the case with washing machines. Past, present and further educational participation is more a question of continuous assessment based upon actual experience of educational activity.

To this can be added the argument that the consumer's knowledge of the educational market is in many ways limited by previous experience. As Doerbecker and Hake (1982) point out:

> *"Most adults have a limited view of the total provision of adult education, which can seriously limit their estimation of a matching educational activity. Furthermore, expression of felt needs is most likely to be formulated in terms of existing provision rather than wants for some non-existing provision".*

Measures of felt need may be referring variously to felt need for existing services, felt need for improved access to existing service, or felt need for non-existing services. Since these will be coloured by experiences with existing services, such measures are not formulated independent of existing provision.

A variation upon the theme of assessing subjective needs is to adopt a *community self-survey* approach to the needs of specific groups among the population. This approach is well known in the adult education literature on needs research (Hand, 1960; Knowles, 1970). The recent literature on community development and community work approaches to adult education also witness to this approach (Lovett, 1975; Fordham et al., 1979; Newman, 1979). This is no less true of the community work approach to neighbourhood and adult education in the Netherlands (Van der Veen, 1982). The close association with action research is pointed out in the viewpoint of Lees (1975) that it seeks:

> *" ... to encourage the involvement of residents in deprived areas in identifying needs and problems".*

This entails discussing problems with the users and non-users of services to discover widely held perceptions of relevant issues and thus helping local people to define their needs for themselves. Problems with this approach to assessing the subjective needs of specific groups in the local population arise from the different perceptions of need which may be identified even within organized community groups. Working through organized community groups to arrive at an assessment of needs cannot avoid the possible differences in the perceptions of the opinion-leaders in such groups and those they claim to represent. As Lees (1975) reports:

> *" ... there was no necessary congruence between 'needs' as identified by ... leaders of an immigrant organization and those expressed by the immigrant population".*

It is necessary here to take into account the tendency of organizations, even those among the underprivileged, to be dominated by small leadership or elite groups of activists. In addition to expressing the quite legitimate felt needs of their constituencies, community group organisations can be used as a platform for the needs of the organisational leadership rather than the needs of the constituency itself (Piven and Cloward, 1977).

This certainly presents problems for the local welfare planner seeking to work through established community organisations to arrive at an assessment of felt needs, and for those involved in assisting local people to articulate their needs. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the purposes of community self-surveys as developed in community work are not purely those of data-collection, even when influenced by the need to display major patterns of social inequality and the unfair distribution of resources to felt needs. As developed originally by Lewin (1946) the mobilizing of community groups through the community survey was as important as the data collected. In more recent usage the community self-survey has clearly been associated with the use of data in the pursuit of advocacy strategies on behalf of community groups (Kahn, 1973).

### *Assessing Objective Needs*

George and Wilding (1976) refer to the assessment of subjective needs as a 'populist approach' in which what the people want is defined as need. They point furthermore to what they call the "expert approach" as the possibility of arriving at measures of objective needs which are independent of the subjective needs of the population. In the developing repertoire of local planning in the Netherlands we can distinguish a number of options which are employed to this end. We look once again at the notion of need employed and the measurements achieved.

The construction of a *community profile* and the development of *social indicators* has played an important role in Dutch exercises in local planning of the problem situations in the local authority area, and the social indicators employed provide measures of housing standards, levels of education, unemployment, number of single-parent families, income levels, number of immigrants, etc. Within the authority the social indicators may be separated out for the various neighbourhoods to provide an indication of the relative measure of so-called "problem situations". This may provide the basic information to be used to reallocate resources to those neighbourhoods with the greatest problems. In most cases the data is complied through making use of already existing statistical materials such as demographic data, socio-economic data, and data on the social infrastructure drawn from local territorial planning.

Extensive *comparative studies of users and non-users* of educational services have not been conducted to any large degree in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, elements of this approach can be isolated. On the one hand the local authority may lay down certain desired educational standards for the population. Social indicators of the educational standards among the population e.g. literacy may be employed to provide an assessment of the number of people who do not currently meet the desired standard. An indication of educational need is produced. On the other hand, without defining such a desired level of provision, a comparison may be made between those using services and those not currently using them. Where non-users share the same characteristics as those using services, they are regarded as being in need of the service. A measure of those 'in need' is achieved in either approach.

A significant option in the Dutch context is the *consultation of 'expert' opinion* to provide measurements of objective needs. The now classic definition between subjective and objective needs, which is widely employed in the Netherlands as we have seen, suggests a number of sources of objective expert opinion (Hinnekint, 1972). Statements of objective needs of the population or specific categories within it, may be elicited from social researchers, independent professional experts, agency workers, referral agents, and others who have knowledge of the social situation of the population e.g. church leaders, trade union representatives, doctors, midwives, etc.

Also of interest to some in the Netherlands (Bokma and Doerbecker, 1977; Van der Veen, 1982), but not widely used in planning, is the *experimental approach* to determining educational needs. This approach illustrates many of the features of the 'selective appeal' model proposed by McKinley (1973). Experimental programmes are developed on the basis of the presumed needs of a specific target population. Resulting programmes are run experimentally and the capacity to meet the needs of the target population is evaluated. Important for local planning of adult education is the assumption that the needs of known target groups can be objectively assessed and appropriate programmes developed on this basis.

These main options for assessing the objective needs of the adult population share the common assumption that it is possible to arrive at objective measures of needs which are independent of the subjective needs felt by the population. As George and Wilding (1976) argue the result of such assessments may be in agreement with but may also be in opposition to the results based upon the "populist view" of subjective needs. The tendency to view this measuring of objective needs as in some way an indication of 'real need' (Bradshaw, 1972; Monette, 1977; Smith, 1980) is less important than the uncertainty which surrounds the claims to objectivity and independence of such measures of need. This point most obviously relates to the objective nature of needs of the population indicated by so-called expert opinion. The normative nature of assessments based on expert opinion will be immediately clear. It could be argued that there may be as many different and conflicting normative standards laid down as there are experts (Bradshaw, 1972). If anything in the literature of needs and need-assessment is clear, it can be only that these normative criteria vary from expert to expert, and between different categories of expert assessors (Smith, 1980).. By locating various factors deemed to be in some way causally related to educational needs among adults, and then measuring these to provide an assessment of objective needs, we do indeed escape from the subjective needs of the population, but at the same time become enmeshed in the subjectivity of expert opinion. Such expert opinions cannot be divorced from the differing perspectives of experts and their understandings of the causal social circumstances which may precipitate educational needs. In the sense that the subjective needs of the population are the products of socialisation and experience with the educational services, expert opinions are subjective states produced by professional socialisation in training or experience of working within the service agencies. Expert opinions are closely related to the various ways of thinking about the causes of 'social problem situations', and the appropriate measures to be taken to resolve the problems. In local welfare planning it is possible to accomplish measures of objective needs but the validity of these assessments as being independent of agency related notions of need must be questioned. Objective needs are in reality measurements of the varying perceptions of diverse bodies of expert opinion which are employed. They are only objective in the sense that they are not located in the subjective experience of those found to be 'in need'. Being found to be objectively 'in need' means more or less that certain experts are persuaded that certain social conditions are needs-producing.

The assessment of objective need is intended to provide information on the needs of the population which is independent both of the subjective wants of the population and the notions of need helf by the providing educational services. Criticism of the repertoire of assessment procedures available to the local planner suggests that measures of objective needs are to a great degree dependent on the notions of need held by those in the "needs-meeting business".

## 3. *The Use of Needs Assessments*

The local authority planner in the Netherlands can more or less successfully accomplish the task of assessing the needs of the local population. He may produce a number of measures of the subjective needs and will complement these with a number of measures of objective needs.

The variation in actual planning practice is well illustrated by those research studies which have examined the workings of decentralized local welfare planning and especially adult education. Van Diemen and Kraan (1981) report for example, that of the 77 local authorities they studied, 53% investigated the needs of the population in some way, and in 40% of these cases the population as such was asked directly what they considered to be their educational needs. Direct participation by the population through "hearings" is provided for in only 8% of local authorities, and is normally restricted to participation after the plan for adult education has been prepared. This results in a picture of needs assessment as being conducted largely by consulting the welfare organisations as to the needs of users and non-users, interviews with opinion leaders as to the needs of the population, or the development of community profiles based on suspect secondary data. This suggests, furthermore, that assessments of objective needs tends to take place to a greater degree than the assessment of subjective needs as felt by the population.

This should direct our attention to the process in which statements of need are worked up into political decisions about priority needs, individuals and groups with these needs, and the agencies to be given the task of meeting these needs. As Bell and Courtney (1979) point out there may be a tendency to refer greater weight to assessments of objective rather than subjective needs in the planning process. The assessment of objective needs may be regarded as providing a more independent yardstick for determining the range of provision 'needed' than the subjective wants of the population. This means that social indicators of needs-producing social conditions will be regarded as providing a sound empirical basis for decision. This is confirmed by the tendency of Dutch local authorities to give preference to the assessment of objective needs even at the date-gathering stage.

A broad range of data about needs will be produced in the planning process. In all local authorities this data will be brought into the deliberations of the advisory committee which is set up to prepare a draft plan for presentation to the full council of the authority. This committee is supposed to represent the various interests in the authority area. It is the intention of the local planning legislation that the advisory committee should comprise representatives of the various attitudes towards welfare among the local population and that the service agencies should also be represented. The composition of the committee is determined by the local authority. In the original debate on the decentralisation of welfare policy, this democratic representation of various interests among users and providers was regarded as a major politicisation of social welfare and especially to increase the influence of (potential) client groups. We should expect, therefore, the committee to represent both the demand upon services, and the service providers. The representation of users could provide a democratic check upon the interests of the providers, and could offer the possibility for the introduction of non-professional understandings of needs-producing social conditions and specific formulations of needs by groups in the population.

The research studies of decentralisation, especially in the area of adult education, indicate that the intentions of the law on local planning are far from being fulfilled. In most authorities the advisory committee is composed of representatives of organised interests in the voluntary and state sectors, and especially of the professional representatives of these agencies. The representation of the interests of unorganized users is extremely limited if non-existent. Recent studies present a rather dismal picture of the representation of perspectives other than those of the providing agencies. We are given a view of the planning practice in which the interests of providers dominate the preparation of the local plans. The professionals put themselves forward as the representatives of the population and groups within it, and even organized groups of users - tenants associations, community groups - are not involved to any significant degree.

The possibility of participation by the population in public hearings to discuss the draft plan proposals are dominated by the diverse interest groups and the individual 'citizen' is a rare phenomenon (Leene and Schuyt, 1982). It would appear not only that local planning has failed to break through the existing distribution of power in welfare provision, but that it may indeed have added to that power by bringing into existence a highly complex planning procedure. The organized institutions have been able to form important coalitions with the new breed of welfare planners in the local authorities. The potential users of welfare provision were to be drawn into a democratic decision-making at the local level, but remain effectively as spectators the margins of the planning process. Far from becoming participants they remain the objects of welfare planning.

Furthermore, the political parties on local councils have been very ambivalent in their attitudes towards direct participation of the population in local planning. They have often done little to discourage the partnership, or coalition, between the planning professionals and the agency professionals, the former being frequently recruited from the members of the latter group. The preparation of an educational or four-year welfare plan and annual programme for the authority is a requirement for financing from central government. The concern of the authority is the completion of this task as efficiently as possible, providing that the minimal legal requirements for needs assessment are satisfied.

The Dutch experience with democratic local welfare planning should present few surprises for those who are aware of similar experiences with participation in public planning exercises and special programmes to this end in the United States or the United Kingdom. The dominance of the perspectives and understandings of professionals and agencies in the working-up of information on needs into political decisions seems to complement if not add to the implicit bias towards professional perspectives and notions in the needs assessment operation itself. The perspectives of potential users of educational and welfare services are brought into play onlt to a limited degree and mostly by proxy, e.g. when agencies and practitioners argue their case.

An increasing recognition of this development in local planning has given rise in some quarters to interest in approaches to communicative planning. The Dutch institute for adult education has conducted a research project with communicative planning approaches to the local planning of adult education (Doets, 1982). The approach adopted in communicative planning is based on the recognition that the different actors engaged in the planning process possess different perspectives on problem situations and the needs arising from these situations. An action research model is adopted in which the aim is to develop an improved repertoire for action by those involved in the planning process, and to provide an improved information input and open communication of this information in the planning process. Such action research approaches to communicative planning may depart from the collaboration of the researchers with the different groups engaged in the planning exercise. Doets (1982) starts from the questions and issues which local planners encounter in their educational planning activities. Strik (1982) takes the perspective of the users of welfare services organized at the neighbourhood level as his point of departure. Both share in common the intention to develop those social skills which are regarded as a necessary requirement for the realisation of a democratic local planning procedure based on the communication of information pertinent to the planning process. Action research is the mode of research chosen to develop these skills, and the central element of this research mode is that the research product should be developed in collaboration with those involved (Doets, 1982). As Strik (1982) argues, this can mean that the understandings of need-producing social conditions and the associated formulations of needs generated by neighbourhood groups can be more effectively introduced into the planning procedure. In this way it is hoped to be able to exploit the margins for participation by the population which are formally available in the legislation on local democratic welfare planning.

The product of this approach to action research in communicative planning can be understood as the creation of social resources for the various parties engaged in local welfare planning. In this sense we move away from the idea of educational needs as being objective characteristics which can be measured through needs assessment and adopt the position in which needs are regarded as the social perspectives of the various parties engaged in local planning. To the degree that this action research results in strengthening the position of the users of welfare services it may be seen as a welcome correction of the dominance of the social resources of the welfare professionals in local planning. However, it should be pointed out that the bulk of local authorities pursue the logic of measuring the subjective and objective needs of the population in some way, and that the perspective of communicative planning is shared by few. Clarity as to the mode of action research is only very slowly emerging.

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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ANIMATION TO AN INNOVATIVE SOCIETY

László Harangi

One of the bases upon which great human achievements rest - from the simplest achievements of the mind or body to the highest creations in science or the arts - is creativity, or innovation. Knowledge and intelligence can be important, but they are by no means indispensable for creative activity. However, nonconforming ways of thinking, vivid imagination and the perception of new connections are necessary. Only he who is capable of renewing himself from time to time is capable of the greatest achievements.

We find a similar situation with the macro-world of human communities: in the family, in secondary and tertiary communities, in organizations of production and distribution right up to the nation and the society. Only that society is able to transcend itself which is always looking out for what is new and is able to break with old customs and adapt to changes, while it itself is changing.

### *The Innovative Development of the Hungarian Economic System*

The structure of the Hungarian economy was characterized by East-European backwardness in development between the two World Wars. This was deepened by the damage of the war, which left the country in a catastrophic state. After the war reconstruction began, followed by the nationalization of industry, the sharing out of large estates, the foundation of smallholders' farms and finally their enforced concentration in large agricultural co-operatives. The extensive development of the national economy and its centralized planning produced primarily quantitative results but after a decade it soon exhausted its reserves.

Economists recognized relatively early that the situation was intolerable and reacted with reform ideas as early as in the 1940's and 1950's. Since the mid sixties they have worked out comprehensive innovations and reforms, which have enabled the economy, since 1968, to utilize resources more efficiently, while taking a more liberal line on the human factors and interests in the economic process. The market mechanism grew in importance by being allowed to operate more freely; firms were given more independence, and material interests and pay-according-to-achievement were allowed to a greater extent. All this contributed to the development of productive forces and to a relatively rich assortment of products.

Recent development in economic innovation are measures to be gradually introduced in the new system of economic administration from 1985 onwards. The new point of the regulative system is the encouraging of a unified system of personal interest based on mutual advantage. Management directed at profit will become a general expectation of economic units, along more precise guidelines than ever before. Administration of state-owned enterprises will be organized in the form of enterprise-councils and an elected leadership. The reform of company administration will certainly reduce the bureaucratic, centralized selection of leaders; more realistically, selection will be based on actual achievement and worker's collectives will have more opportunity to influence decsions in general, and the election of managers in particular.

### *Social Democratism and Innovation*

Again our starting point has to be the historical and social fact, that typifies East Europe in general; a powerful and class-conscious bourgeoisy was not able to evolve over the past 200 years as occurred in such Western societies as Holland. Our society did not have a similarly stable layer of middle class democratic traditions to serve as a basis for a new socialist social order. Nevertheless, the overthrowing of the anachronistic and partly feudal capitalist state in 1945 was a revolutionary act which paved the way for an essentially bourgeois-democratic order, called the *"people's democracy"*, within the framework of the coalition which lasted from 1945 to 1948-49.

After the liberation from the Nazis, a social mechanism - shaped by a balance of power characterized by the coalition, and based on a multi-party system - cane into being which clearly mirrored the political efforts and interests of the classes and groups forming the nation. In public culture and adult education this situation manifested itself in an articulated variety of associations, societies, etc., partly on a completely new basis, partly continuing pre-war traditions. The particular parties not only offered courses and free schools of different types, but also ran people's academies. Overall, the coalition government created room for middle-class, populist and communist cultural activities, associations and societies alike, which promoted their programmes sometimes in alliance, sometimes in competition.

The changes in 1949 put an end to this intensive burt short period. Partly out of political mistrust, and partly due to the introduction of a centralized system of administration, the majority of national and local associations, among them many traditional organizations, were closed down. In towns and villages the network of state and trade union institutions for cultural animation. run by the state and by the trade unions, was built up and the earlier independent associations were fused into it, maintaining a role later as study circles and clubs run by the cultural centres. This period similar to the economy and agricultural sector, was characterized by extensive development which indeed made culture assessible to large masses of the population who has previously been excluded from it, but nevertheless made cultural animation and education unwholesomely uniform.

Since the 1970's however, and especially in the past three to four years, we have had the opportunity to witness the revival in associational activity. A new departmental order was issued outlining the possibilities of association provided by law in 1982, and the Minister of Culture issued a new rule on the establishing of national associations formed for cultural purposes. These meet the demands of society, even though the procedures governing the establishment and approval of associations are not as simple as those for economic associations. The increasing interest in associations is closely connected with democratic processes occuring in other fields of social life: democratisation in working collectives was broadened; and a new voring reform will be introduced in 1985 with a prescribed minimum of two or more nominations. The hierarchy of public administration was significantly simplified in 1983 by the abolition of districts which had no representational function. The general effort has been to democratize aims, or more particularly, to increase the independence of individuals and villages and the autonomy of society of a local level, and to bring the population into a closer and more active role in decision-making processes. The general condition of the population - an expression of trust - the maintained relatively high standard of living and the increased spare-time of the population all provide a good basis for such changes. The newly formed associations, those now being formed and the small local collectives being turned into associations are remedying what has been lacking, and are a sign both of the stagnation and bureaucratization of existing institutions and social organizations and of the necessity to reform them.

However, the renewal of social processes and the innovations in adult education and socio-cultural animation have not kept pace with the continued innovations in economic development. In the last decade further attempts have been made to modernize public cultural life and to arouse social initiatives in this field as well, e.g. the open houses experiments at the end of the 1970's.

Although living communities, working communities and communities engaged in cultural activities are being given increasing room, the process is still only in its early phases. These initial but promising developments were given further impetus both by a political recommendation, formulated in 1974, for the long-term on the social role of socio-cultural animation, and by an Act on Public Education in 1976, which formulated the questions of the right to culture and the tasks of society.

### *The Contribution of Socio-cultural Animation to an Innovative Economy and Society*

Socio-cultural animation and adult education cannot be considered as separate from society, economic processes and politics. They are both dependent on them, and react to them.

Their increased responsibility and broadened scope of action requires of citizens a high level of general education and professional knowledge; it requires that they should, as the 'proprietors' that they are, take part in the decision-making process at a local work place and national level. This applies especially to state-owned firms where enterprise councils and an elected leadership will be formed in the near future. It is essential that present and future administrators should master the social and communicative skills which will enable them to assert their democratic rights as fully as possible.

The family, living and working communities, circles of friends, and associations, all have an especially important role. The creative powers inherent in individuals are manifested within these small communities. The system of institutionalized and informal small communities and associations makes society stronger and will be transformed into material forces in the very production of goods. These communities are the schools of communal education which no type of society with an ideal image of community can do without, especially socialism. On the other hand, the renewing of the economy, and the raising of the technological level also requires, both of white- and blue-collar workers, a better adaptive capacity and a higher level of training.

However, adult education can only aid innovation in society if, in method as well as in spirit, it is creative and capable of changing and developing continuously. The system of organizations of socio-cultural animation has begun to become conscious of social challenges that face it.

# PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

Erik Kats and Folke Glastra

The use of audio-visual media has taken enormous development, also in social and cultural welfare work. They are, for example, used to stimulate discussion by means of photographic reportages and tapeslides. Neighbourhood centres record the highlights in their activities on video tapes. Social campaigns are supported by action films. These are but a few examples of the type of work called "community media" (Nigg & Wade, 1980).

The Department of Andragology of the State University in Leiden has, for some years, been investigating the field of community media, in particular the use of films to promote social and cultural welfare work. Such films and video-tapes are meant to induce people to join in a program, to become involved in action for a purpose, etc. Our investigation is concerned with three components of the communication process: the production of films, the signifying structure of the films themselves, and the ways in which films function for user groups. In the first phase we studied how community media groups go about making films, which 'production strategies' are used. (Kats & Glastra, 1984). This research phase lead, among others to the set-up of a so-called repertory of action (cf. Doets, 1982), a complex of potential working methods for the making of action films (Glastra, Kats & Kuyt, 1982). The investigation is now in its second phase, where the analysis of films is a central concern (cf. Kuchenbuch, 1978).

Our study is part of a longer research program dealing with frictional problems in social and cultural welfare work, in particular in adult education (Hake & Doerbecker, 1979, 1983). Frictional problems have to do with the relationships between welfare work activities and the life-world of target groups. Making use of audio-visual programs in this field is a fairly recent problem solving strategy. England is in many respects the spawning-ground for this sort of work and for activation work in general. For this reason, we have repeatedly made fieldstudies in England: in the field of 'outreach work' as an activation strategy (Hake & Jehee, 1980) and in the field of employing audiovisual media for activation in adult education and community development (Kats, Glastra & Coenraads, 1982; Both, Hake & Jehee, 1980). In 1983, we studied the variety of the use of community media, namely of video, film, photography, printed information and 'community arts' in adult education, community development and social action. Special attention was given to the use of community media for activating specific groups, such as: women's groups, tenants' organizations, trade union groups, cultural minorities, neighbourhood groups and action groups (Both et al., 1984). In this article we shall discuss various examples of media projects, their working methods, forms of organization and products. Also we will state some points for further research and sketch some of the differences and similarities between the English and Dutch situation.

## *Examples of community media projects*

### *1. Moonshine Community Arts Centre*

The Moonshine Community Arts Centre, a district centre in the London borough of Brent, houses a large number of activities. Workshops in photography, video, super-8 filming and drama facilities are available. It is the base of a youth theatrical group and of a women's group. The hall, a former church is being used for theatrical performances, rehearsals and youth programs. There is also a printshop. The activities are integrated, which means that they do not operate as mutually independent work units within the centre.

Although the centre's scope is mainly creative and artistic work, it also functions as a place where people from the neighbourhood may drop in with their questions and problems. Advice is requested in connection with rent and maintenance problems, young people come in with their difficulties (police, school, parents) and the old age pensioners come for clubs or for assistance.

The Moonshine Community Video Project provides the common denominator for the video activities organized by the centre. It has only one expert video worker employed, to whom questions from several neighbourhoods with a total population of 400,000 are referred to. This circumstance, together with the fact that the employee concerned has a background of film-making and regards himself as a filmer rather than a social worker, is reflected in the working method and the philosophy underlying the project.

There are three kinds of activities: training groups and individuals to produce video-tapes of good quality; supporting community video projects; the production of films about political and social problems by the video employee himself, possibly in cooperation with groups involved.

The video workshop, is meant to engage neighbourhood people in making films in a more or less professional way. The basic point is that the participants should be interested. It makes no difference whether the project is an abstract, artistic film or a documentary on neighbourhood issues. In this manner people learn to carry out a project themselves. In the various phases of the work, the participants acquire diverse skills, such as making an estimate of the costs, fundraising, handling a camera, interview techniques, maintenance of the technical equipment, etc.

The training in film-making is subject to the condition that the trainees should be available for taking part in projects in the neighbourhood, and that any income that may result from these community video projects should go to the benefit of the Moonshine Community Arts Centre. In this way, the participants - whose training is for free - can repay the costs. After two years of workshops, at the end of 1983 there were 15 persons left who were available for such neighbourhood projects. Four of them are sufficiently skilled to launch individual projects and to support them. They do so not only in their own neighbourhood, but also in the other neighbourhoods of North West London. Thus, video workshops also serve as a means for the training and development of cadre. This diminishes the workload of the hitherto solitary video-worker of Moonshine, and reduces the risk that if he should leave, all that has been built up would collapse.

An example of a workshop project is a video-tape made by a teacher of an 'English as a Second Language' course. She used the tapes as learning material in her lessons, taught her pupils to work with video, made them interview each other and finally edited it all into a film about her class.

More traditional community video-projects deal with local problems of the neighbourhood. Although no equipment is lent out, the accent in the collaboration of Moonshine Video with groups in the neighbourhood lies on their active involvement. No film is produced for them. Groups that come along with the idea of a film must elaborate it alone and make the film themselves. They do get support from the video employee and from former workshop trainees. It is not thought desirable to make them dependent where this is not necessary. The idea is: people can do it themselves, even though the beginning may be often difficult. This derives from the circumstance that people have not learned to take responsibility. They have to learn it while working on the project.

Finally, the video-worker of Moonshine regularly makes films of his own about various subjects. He makes films on his own initiative about local problems of the neighbourhood that have not yet been filmed by community groups. He also did much work for CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament). One of the films produced in this context was concerned with the views and activities of a women's group in London concerning nuclear weapons. It is a montage of interviews, statements, glimpses of a theatrical play and campaigns round Greenham Common by members of the group. Sometimes he would make advertizing films in order to finance the workshops and the community video-projects. Those attending a workshop pay according to capacity, but as Moonshine is situated in a poor district with a high percentage of immigrants, the proceeds do not cover the costs. Neighbourhood groups that come to Moonshine to realize a community video project don't possess as a rule sufficient means either. Hence, the uncertainty about prolongued subsidies makes commercial work necessary in order to supplement the costs of maintaining the level of the facilities provided and of the contributions of workshop members. Nevertheless, this kind of 'mixed economy' is no problem-free solution. During the time advertizing films are made, no workshops can be held nor is it possible to produce films for the community.

### 2. *Camerawork*

Camerawork is established in a busy shopping-street in the London borough Bethnal Green. The building has a large shopwindow with photographs and announcements. Behind it there is an exposition room and a counter for information and advice. The cellar is equipped with a dark room for the use of people from the neighbourhood, the 'community dark room'. In addition to exposition, dark room and advisory functions, Camerawork publishes a quarterly under the same name.

Camerawork pursues the production and distribution of socially engaged photography. Its aim is to stimulate people to look at photographic images with a critical eye and to show how they are generally used by mass media. They attempt to achieve the latter by photomontages emitting visual codes that are the reverse of the current ones seen daily, or a modified version of those. The purpose is, to compare such contrasting or modified representations with the dominant visual codes, and by doing so stimulate re-thinking the relationship, e.g. of man and woman, white and black, statements and actions. The images are always provided with a text that puts them into a context.

In the gallery of Camerawork some 12 expositions are held yearly, mostly of documentary work of photomontages on specific themes. Some of the work is from beginners, other from professionals. Camerawork may commission known photographers to expose their work, at other times work by the inhabitants of the district or groups of the community is shown. All prints are plasticized so that they can be conveniently packed and transported for exposition in community centres or shops. At the moment, there are some 50 itinerant expositions available. In addition to a national circuit, they started in cooperation with various London boroughs, to set up a local circuit for neighbourhood centres that are not in a position to make their own expositions. The expositions are always composed around a defined topic which is echoed in the quarterly magazine and in the workshops as much as possible. Some of these topics are: racism in London, people with a handicap, industrial labour, nuclear weapons, Northern Ireland, women and aging.

The workshops are open for individuals and groups of the community who can work on own contributions to courses, expositions and neighbourhood actions under the guidance of tutors. Participation in workshops and the use of the dark room is for members only.

### 3. *Four Corners*

At a short distance from Camerawork in the same street is the site where Four Corners is located. A group of seven filmmakers works here on film projects more or less indepedently from each other, often with people from the neighbourhood. The filmers at Four Corners definitely do not regard their organization as a 'community centre' free for anyone to drop in. It is rather a place where you can acquire the skill to make films, on condition that you enrol first. The filmers regard the making of a 16-mm film as such a complicated matter that it is impossible to tackle it on community basis.

The group possesses good cameras, editing and projection equipment. The 16-mm editing rooms are regularly hired. The building houses a cinema with 40 seats. In the shopwindow of Four Corners, along with bulletins of the workshops and announcements of the films shown, there is room for small expositions.

By showing films and discussing them, it is the intention to stimulate filmmaking. Every Friday night there is a film-show in the cinema. As a rule, films are selected according to a given theme and fill part of the evening, during the rest of which lectures or a discussion are also scheduled. The cinema can be hired by individuals or groups who wish to show films to their own public. These are often the previewing of a film, the scanning of raw material, proofediting, but they may be held for film research classes or meetings convened to watch a film.

Together with local community organisations (e.g. the Tower Hamlets Youth Office and the Tower Hamlets Institute for Adult Education), workshops are organized for young people and adults. An example is the workshop "Films for Action", where the subject: film and social conflict is dealt with. Here, recent films, produced outside the commercial circuit and the television companies are presented and discussed, basic film techniques learned, and finally it is attempted to induce the group to make a film of its own. The workshops also cooperate with individuals in the neighbourhood to realize individual productions. An instance of this is a film made by a neighbourhood resident coming from

Bangla Desh about his personal experience with various aspects of life in England.

### 4. *Islington Bus Company*

The Islington Bus Company is in a neighbourhood centre in the London borough of Islington, from where a large number of social welfare activities are organized and supported. They call themselves a "Community Resource and Information Centre". The Bus Company has a reception room where neighbourhood residents can drop in for information and advice. There is also a sound studio where youths can make their own programs, which consequently are brought to the attention of London radio stations for broadcasting purposes. There is a silk screen room, stencil machines, a dark room, video equipment and all sorts of handicraft materials. All are at the disposal of organized or semi-organized groups from the neighbourhood. The underlying idea is that the groups must help themselves and each other, and must not be dependent of the community centre. This has several implications.

The apparatus available must be fairly simple to use, so that the staff members of the centre should not have to give support for long. Training of the users is an important task of the Bus Company. Sometimes this is realized by the participation of a member of the staff in the project of a community group, more structural are the courses in photography, silk screen-printing and the maintenance of copiers and stencil machines. The use of the equipment may not be too costly.

Work is restriced to Islington-based groups and organizations, with the exclusion of commercial and party-political projects. Training and support was provided, for example, to a group of parents who tried to enlist the interest of fellow-residents of the neighbourhood in multi-cultural education, by means of a series of posters, to counteract growing racism in the district.

In 1982, 500 groups availed themselves of the facilities of the Bus Company. Since 1981, an additional staff member has been employed for outreach work, to approach new groups. By then it had become clear that an open approach where self-reliance was central, did not appeal to all sorts of neighbourhood groups. Specifically, the aged and retired did not make much use of the centre.

As indicated before, video equipment is part of the facilities of the community centre. It is borrowed and used by a large number of groups. The staff takes care of the loan and the maintenance, and provides short video-courses for beginners. Further, a video-library has been built up where tapes are filed for public use. These are usually reports of 'historical events', or tapes for multiple use. The users, groups from the community bring in their own ideas, they record events and show their products. They receive no support from the centre which limits its cooperation to making the material available, and to giving a basic technical training in video courses. These courses do not deal with more complicated operations, like editing techniques or instruction in film composition. The staff of Islington Bus Company find the quality of the program of lesser importance, working with video is more essential. It is an opportunity for the various groups to make contacts and develop cooperation, and is regarded as a means for community development. The tapes made by the community groups, deal with issues like rent and maintenance problems, difficulties of ethnical minorities, health education etc.

### 5. *Fleet Community Education Centre*

Fleet Community Education Centre in the London borough of Hampstead has an experimental status, which means that new working methods can be tested. Hence, there are more possibilities for starting new activities. Characteristic of the Centre is the integration of community work and adult education, as far as possible. Formal as well as non-formal adult education is provided for, and activities are organized for all age groups. The

Centre has a large hall surrounded by a coffee bar, a pottery workshop, a handicrafts workshop, a dark room and a parlour for neighbourhood groups. The hall itself is used for various activities, like a crèche, children's play groups, theatrical performances of own or invited theatre groups, rock-concerts, neighbourhood festivities, etc. Also a mathematics course for adults is given; the Centre is the meeting place of a 40-plus unemployed group, health information is given and recently, a video has been introduced.

It is pointed out emphatically that this is a 'community *education centre*' and not merely a 'community centre'. People are not simply kept busy, but educational aspects are stressed. In the dark room, not only prints are made, but they are also discussed in terms of ways of getting the message across. Also, the theatrical projects, in which the participants think up a play, which they rehearse and present, give them opportunity to discover and develop their own talents and possibilities.

Emphasis is laid on the integrative nature of the variety of activities within Fleet. This is also expressed in the membership system. You do not enroll for a course, but you join the Centre as member. Membership is open for anyone living in the neighbourhood or working there, irrespective of age. Once a member, you have access to all activities and not just to the course that induced you to join the Centre. You may drop in with any activity without engagement, you may bring your kids along, all of which is believed to lower the threshold. A condition for this kind of work is that the activities in the Centre should be integrated. Drama-productions present such an integrative hold for many facilities the Centre offers, for different things are needed here. Apart from acting itself, texts, costumes, scenery and music are wanted. Video is regarded rather as a part of other activities than as independent film making. It is meant to be used as feed-back instrument for the learning of social skills and of interview techniques, for the recording of events in the

Centre for the purpose of discussion and information, during rehearsals of plays and for recording the end result.

### 6. *The Albany*

The Albany is a community centre that has been in existence for a few years, but has recently moved to a new building. The building was designed in common understanding between the staff and the architects. The centre is built around a coffee-shop with restaurant that has, in short time, become a meeting place for the neighbourhood. Around it there are small units that are accessible from the inside as well as from the street. Each project has a location of its own with its own entrance. Not all of these 'shops' are used for projects of The Albany, some are let to independent community organizations. Finally the building has a theatre which is likewise independent from The Albany.

The Albany has a project for unemployed, another one for parents and children, and one for the retired. They give advice about regulations concerning allowances, unemployment, social rights, etc. There is a section for photography and video and a printshop. A section has been provided for students from social and community work training courses who can get field work experience with various projects in the Albany. They are supported by two members of the staff specially employed for the purpose.

In the following we shall deal in particular with the work of the video-section of The Albany. Its scope covers different activities: a training course for the maintence of the equipment, a video-training course, support and advizing working with video, and running a video-library. Also programs are produced.

Neighbourhood groups can bring their own equipment for repair to the maintenance project. They get instruction there from an expert about how to do the repairs themselves. This course meets a need, for much of the equipment becomes defective and technical know-how to repair it is scarce. Besides, having camera's fixed by specialized firms often lasts unnecessarily long so that deadlines can not be met.

A second program is learning to work with video. Usually, the centre works together with community groups and only rarely with individual persons. Camera's and recorders are seldom lent out, for they are easily damaged or used in the wrong manner, that is without considering whether it is the suitable medium for the purpose or the public envisaged. Hence there is usually some kind of cooperation, to assist community groups to produce a tape of good quality. The centre works both with low-price and with high-grade equipment. The latter is only lent out if the group can prove that it cooperates with someone sufficiently experienced in handling it. The video-project is by no means a 'resource centre'.

A third task within the video-project is the maintenance of a videolibrary for the films made by people in the neighbourhood. Beforehand, arrangements are made with them concerning distribution and showings. The tapes must not remain stored, they must be shown. Such previous arrangement stimulates the makers to discuss suitable target groups and to bear resulting decisions in mind during production. For instance, a project group intended to make a film about run-away youths. Eventually, the film was targeted on youths between 15 and 20 years. This was taken into account in the composition and length of the film: there are rapid switchovers from enacted situations to interviews, the film is interspersed with humoristic scenes and reggae music, and it was decided to keep it short. The makers were aware that the attention of the target group could not be held for long.

### 7. *Radio Thamesmead*

This is a radio broadcasting unit in Thamesmead, a suburb of London. It is a typical dormitory-town with few facilities for entertainment and leisure. Radio Thamesmead is settled in a normal flat in a building that so far, could not be adapted to its broadcasting purposes. It thus happens that the editorial staff is located in the kitchen, the discothèque is stored in the bathroom, and the broadcasts are sent out via the bedroom. Radio Thamesmead is also licensed to broadcast television programs. This year, the Radio has 4 full-time and 6 part-time collaborators, a comparatively high strength, considering that local radio stations of BBC have a staff of 4 at the most.

Although Radio Thamesmead has a commercial licence, they do not intend to work commercially. Rather than imitating the big broadcasting companies, they want to develop a community style of broadcasting of their own. They believe this will necessarily take a long time: most listeners are conditioned by the programs of the big broadcast organisations. It will be necessary to send out much music to hold the attention of the listeners, and the familiar voice of a regular announcer should have the same effect. They endeavour to deal with as many as possible of the subjects concerning the district in the programs. Community groups will, in the future, get a chance to hire air-time.

Recently, they started a program with the community policeman: in reply to complaints of the citizens, he talks about vandalism, the use of drugs and other criminal behaviour. The 'citizens' may come in person to the studio to talk to the policeman live. It is hoped in this manner to improve the relationship between police and inhabitants.

As the staff now in charge has been contracted for one year only and as further finances are uncertain, volunteers are being trained for broadcasting work. In recruiting them, it is a condition they should be residents of Thamesmead.

### 8. *The Basement Publishing Project*

The Basement contains a dark room, a room for silk screen-printing, a publishing office and a small school for children from the district who, for one reason or another do not, or no longer, attend a regular school. So youngsters as well as adults participate in the project.

In the course of its work, the school makes use of other facilities available in The Basement. For example, in language classes the children made booklets using the reproduction apparatus and obtained graphic advice from other staff of The Basement.

In The Basement Publishing Project not only material for the benefit of certain target groups is published, but also material made by the target group itself. In the first category they published, for instance, information booklets about social rights and health care in Bengalese. Apart from this kind of service, people are stimulated to publish material from their own culture to show that it has valuable and fine things to present.

Sometimes, roundabout ways have to be chosen to arrive to such a publication. The graphic designer - a woman - told us that in order to establish contact with a group of Bengalese girls, she first contacted their school teacher and attended a class in handicraft skills. The girls were told to make Bengalese dolls. This seemed to be difficult, for at first they only wanted to make white dolls with western dress. As the project proceeded, they gradually learned to (re)appreciate their own culture. Only then were they inclined to write something about their culture and to have it published. Another project at The Basement published bilingual readers, in English and in the native tongue.

The Basement helps with the publication of booklets, advises about lay-out and graphic design, and takes care of the distribution. Some products are spread locally only, others have a country-wide distribution.

## 9. *Interaction*

Interaction is a 'community arts' centre in Kentish Town, London, active for about 15 years, where a variety of activities have been developed. Some of these are: advice regarding architecture in the district, book publishing, a crèche, a children's farm, a printshop, a dark room, a department for audio-visual media, a sound studio and a music workshop. Like the Islington Bus Company, they have a multi-purpose bus to go out into the neighbourhood and carry out projects on the spot.

The audio-visual department lends out equipment, trains the users how to handle it and works on projects. The first task is a routine matter, but it is considered important to teach people to use video in the right way, for it is often inadequatley used. Projects are worked on in different ways: sometimes the work is done jointly with other institutions, but Interaction may also carry out projects for non-commercial groups for a fee. In this manner they can partly support themselves.

In the summer, Interaction organizes street projects for children, making one short program in a day. The multi-purpose bus is equipped with all facilities for silk screen-printing, a dark room, audio equipment and video, so that in the summer performances can be given in the neighbourhood. Rather than working with video, the production and use of tape-slides is gaining ground with Interaction. It is a simpler and cheaper technique, therefore it is more appealing. In addition, it lends itself better for experiments, because images and sound are independently produced, and because one can draw on the slides. The technique is used mainly in youth work. Interaction staff expect better learning results with it than with video. The staggered process of preparing a tape-slides-show and the long production time required oblige the young people to dissociate themselves from the process and to appreciate interim results as well. Against this, it is found that video merely steps up the urge to see immediate results of the work.

The publishing department of Interaction publishes particularly two kinds of books: for social action, i.e. books containing practical hints for finding one's way in the maze of the bureaucratic apparatus, for example, of social security, or what to do if women are mishandled. The second sort are practical instruction books for the use of community groups about subjects like working with video, arts in the neighbourhood, the printing of materials, how to go about publishing, and others.

### *Focal points in community media research*

In the above reports of community media projects various aspects have been brought forward which have a cental place in our study of community media. Among these are the relationship between the media projects on one hand, and other social institutions on the other. Also, the various working methods applied in different media projects are of importance. Different types and functions of productions exist. In the following we shall deal with these aspects more closely in the English as well as the Dutch situation. In spite of differences between the two, the situation is often very similar. The most salient difference is, in our opinion, that in London, a comparatively small geographical area with about just as many inhabitants as the whole of the Netherlands, there is an enormous concentration of projects that have existed longer and are further developed than most projects in the Netherlands. As said before, England and, in particular, London is the birthplace of community media.

### *Situation of the media projects*

The first aspect which strikes the eye when studying the differences in media projects is that some of them function more or less independently, with the main objective of developing and distributing media-products, and others are part of a broader community centre or some other similar unit. The extent of their integration can vary. In some projects, video has merely and auxiliary function, in others there is a rather independent department engaged with video production. Most of the 'integration partners' of the video-projects we studied are community centres. It should not be overlooked that in London, such community centres might serve districts with as many as 400,000 inhabitants. The centres cover a wide range of activities: crèche, handicraft training, creative courses, play-acting, coffee-shop, photography, silk screen-printing, language tuition, women's clubs, various educative activities, work with cultural minorities, literacy-work, activities to acquire professional skills, advice and counseling, the planning of social campaigns, popconcerts, community development, printing for all kinds of purposes (community printing), etc. All these are more or less combined with the focal object of our research: film and video work ('community video'). The diverse community centres present their own 'mixture' with their own specific accents. Naturally, not all activities are pursued in all centres.

In the Netherlands, we have none of the very large multi-functional centres, like The Albany and Interaction. Some community centres are comparable with Moonshine, Islington, Fleet and Basement, but video and film work is much less advanced. Multifunctionality of the centres enhances the integration of the diverse activities. One can easily 'flow through' from one activity to the other, and 'access' is facilitated furthermore by the simple circumstance that there are several 'entrances'. Integration also permits a more flexible use of the tools. In England, the possibility of cooperation in the 'primary line' and the willingness of the staff to cooperate is strikingly good. In the Netherlands, the demarcation line between, e.g., the educational sector, the creative sector, community development, the arts sector and the film and video projects are sharper.

In the Netherlands, the development of community video is chiefly in the hands of more or less independent film and video groups. This is comparable to the English examples of Camerawork, Four Corners and Liberation Films (cf. Kats, Glastra & Coenraads, 1982). Even more than in England, the Dutch groups entertain cross-connections with social movements: neighourhood groups, trade unions, action groups, centres for adult education, women's groups, cultural minorities, third world movements, environmental campaigns, squatters, peace movement, etc. Such cross-connections among independently operating projects give an opportunity to filmmakers to join in with social developments in many fields.

### *Working methods*

Through their contacts with social movements, the mediaprojects have a network of connections with 'society' that allows them more systematic co-operation. Integrated projects have, on the one hand, more ample possibilities, just because they already have a sort of internal network, on the other hand, owing to this they are less 'outward' oriented. This circumstance might point to a drawback of the above-mentioned multifunctional and integrated approach. It is typical that video-productions resulting from integrated projects are preferably shown to the group concerned, while forgetting that they are potentially suitable for a wider public.

An existing network of contacts may make animation as a separate activity seem less urgent. The accent lies rather on creating a fertile ground and an infrastructure within which fresh activities can develop continuously. The need for continuity is, after all, an important reason for the 'network-approach'. The life of the projects is rarely safe, and less so under the Thatcher government. The availability of media may be a necessary condition for their use, but it does not sufficiently justify it. There is a tendency not only to make films for groups, but to involve groups to share in their production. The staff of the centres would in such cases not make the films alone, but would merely support the group that makes them. A further step is the organization of groups able to work independently on a project. In this manner, the members become trained video-workers who can work on their own, so that the continuity of the projects is better assured.

Such co-operation permits approach in which film-themes and angles do not stem from the maker's perspective alone, or remain tied to dominant practices of news-reporting, but which allows the viewpoint of those concerned to come into play. In the field of health education, a film dealing with, e.g., cancer of the cervix, might show in addition to the medical problem in adequate pictures, the experience of women. Also in films about cultural minorities, the vision of the group concerned is of utmost significance. The western image and somewhat picturesque views are a long way from their daily life. In the Netherlands, for example, Teleac - a national organization for educational television - had to wrestle with this problem. 'Community video' provides an alternative approach as a result of co-operation at the base. In London, a similar approach seemed to be fruitful only where the video-projects were set up by video-workers belonging to the cultural minority concerned within the organizing agencies.

The different backgrounds of the staff also affects their methods. Staff with a training in filmmaking are more inclined to attach importance to the (activating function of the) film as end-product, while social workers emphasize the (learning- and perception-moments in) cooperation process of those involved in the production. In making audio-visual programs, many other circumstances come into play: the significance attached to the films (e.g. a means to other ends versus an artistic expression in its own right), the division of work among the participants, possibly the specific accents of the centres in which the work is done (e.g. educative versus creative), or the functions attributed to the film. All of these make it impossible to talk generally about a single type or a few types of 'community video'. This is even more the case, since 'external' factors, such as subsidy, also play a role.

### *Subsidy and the role of offical broadcasting*

The rich variation of 'community media' cannot conceal the fact that the individual projects continuously struggle for financial survival. As was said before, there are numerous activities in the community centres. Such activities are financed by various sources. In London, as a rule, educational programs are subsidized by the ILEA (Inner London Education Authority). Artistic projects, among which film and video, can appeal to GLAA (Greater London Arts Association). For activities in the field of assistance to the unemployed and the improvement of professional skills, the Manpower Services Commission is an important source of funds. The build-up of co-operation, community work and the like are financed by the borough councils and the GLC (Greater London Council), which is threatened to be abolished by the Thatcher government.

In the Netherlands, the subsidy system is equally fragmentary. Adult education depends of three ministries with regard to policy and subsidy: the department of education, that of welfare, health and culture, and that of social affairs. Video falls sometimes under welfare at others under culture, but more often into the void between the two. Subsidies derive from municipalities, provinces and from the state. They can be granted directly, but often via the 'client groups': the trade unions, community centres and others, all of which have their own financial problems.

The flow of subsidies is subject to its own conditions. The uncertainty over the continuation of subsidies has the consequence that programs with the largest possible market are preferred. More intensive forms of co-operation are then relegated to the background.

As the case lies in London, it is even more striking that there is a fairly extensive integration of 'community media' and other forms of community work in the primary line. It is our opinion that two structural factors play a role here. Firstly, staff training of the professional workers is more strongly integrated than in the Netherlands. Secondly, the greatest part of the centres operate under the auspices of the boroughs, even though the means are provided by other agencies.

An important impulse for film and video work in England was given by Channel Four. This applies not only to the subsidies, but also to the extension of audiences and the opportunity to use community video for purposes beyond feed-back. Channel Four is a TV network with the special task of *giving extra attention to more* educational and cultural programs and to specific social groups and minorities. Channel Four not only produces programmes on its own, but obtains them from other sources, among others from media projects such as we have described earlier. Although Channel Four only spends a small portion of its budget on the media projects, it means a great deal for the projects. It is due in particular to Channel Four that the quality of the technical equipment has been much improved. In addition, funds from Channel Four were instrumental in setting up a maintenance service for community video projects. All this greatly influenced the quality of the products, while on the other hand generating new problems of participation and access. Via Channel Four, a number of the films produced reach a far broader public. This development supports the existing tendency to give more publicity to the productions.

In the Netherlands, there is some incidental cooperation between broadcasting organizations and community media-projects. As, however, there is no special interest in educational and cultural programs, the broadcasting of this type of productions has a low priority.

### *Types and functions of community media production*

The variety of working methods leads at least to just as large a variety of products. The field encompassed by 'community media' is moreover broader than that of video and film which are specially dealt with in our research. A rather traditional view regards the film or video-tape as nothing more than a *'report'*. The annual highlight of a community centre is the staging of a play; everybody would like to see it again. A demonstration is a historic event that must be recorded for posterity, for those who missed it or for those who must yet be recruited.

Such a filmed report is limited to showing the events, not, however, how they came about, their background, their causes and the motives involved. Many films mean to fill up this gap by showing not the campaign against nuclear weapons alone, but also how it started and what was the moving force behind it. The *process of consciousness-raising* to the need for action is exposed, it can be felt and shared, at least this is what the makers hope for. The uncertainty of a girl considering abortion is meant to open discussion about the problem. Shared feelings may lead to understanding: what does a young immigrant go through after being dropped in London?

More like a report, but much more to the point is *the muckraking film*; it is meant as accusation and evidence, e.g. concerning poor housing. Nevertheless, such films have limited utility and often there are more appropriate means of action. For example, it seemed rather difficult and time-consuming to film cockroaches. Why take all the trouble when it is far more effective to collect the evidence in jars and push them under the noses of the responsible members of the council.

A more friendly kind of film is the *information film*, though a film with awful stories of a group of youngsters about venereal diseases is not what we would call bland. The main thing is that the matter should be opened up for discussion and action. Most of these are 'what to do' films. Blood is in short supply, you need not be wary of becoming a donor; a small knob in your breast: have it checked and put an end to the uncertainty.

A step further is the *educational film*, for the purpose of developing knowledge and insight. A typical example of the combined process-and-product character of community video is the above described tape over 'English as a second language'. Originally, the tape was made as feed-back material for foreign students of English and was later also used for other groups. Educational films thus lose their 'instructional' character and link up more closely with the daily life of the pupils.

Where a participant becomes an actor, the film grants him a chance for *self-expression*. Working with video lends people a voice of their own in which learning and changing processes melt. Young people enact scenes witnessed at the municipal housing bureau. Many films about women and homosexuals used to come under the 'muckraking' category. Recently, the accent came to lie on the expression of their own identity, which often lends a 'gay' note to the film.

In the above, we merely pointed to a few types of the production, the variety is greater and also, there are no pure types. Each film has its own possibilities and limitations. In addition to and alongside with films, there are other 'community media'.

Tape-slides are a medium whereby some problems inherent in the use of films and video can be avoided. A film requires the spectator to follow the story at a given speed, in a determined sequence (cf. Wember, 1976). This entails some didactic limitations: it is not possible to arrange the 'learning process' to suit the audience. Tape-slides are more flexible in this respect, therefore in various media projects in London they are preferred for stimulating discussion. For the rest, our own research showed that also video-tapes can be used better for learning purposes. The relevant research dealt, among others, with the development and structuring of audio-visual programs. Systematic knowledge affords better control of the tapes: instead of running them off straight, it is possible to review the composition, select parts of it, interrupt it, change the sequence, 'turn the page back', etc. But all of these facilities are more directly available with tape-slides.

Similar aspects are also of importance with 'community photography'. Photographs and expositions of photographs make it literally possible to stand still by what you see, while films dictate a continuous course. These differences stress certain specific functions of the 'community media'. An example of this is a stereotype advertizing photograph, where the roles of man and woman are reversed. Such a picture might provoke discussion over the role of the sexes. A striking aspect of this is that it exposes the basic construction rules of the medium. Another well-known example in this respect is political photomontage, e.g. Mrs. Thatcher holding a stone in her hand in front of the smashed windows of a health centre.

A rather significant difference between tape-slides, community photography and film and video respectively is that the first named are much cheaper and can be more conveniently used by the clients. This holds even more for silk screen-printing, a popular technique in many centra. It is not only used for making posters, but also for artistic purposes. 'Community Publishing' and 'Community Printing' are other kinds of 'community media' activities. We can distinguish here comparable functions - as with film and video - and also distinctive functions. The appreciation of their own cultural identity by minority groups is strongly boosted by producing books in their native language, dealing with their own culture. Apart from being used by the group concerned, these books can also serve the general public. They are sometimes distributed by means of the so-called 'community bookshop'. Another interesting type of community writing deals with 'local history'. A taxidriver tells the story of his life; the past history of housing; social relations in working-class settlements are a few examples. Significantly, some of the booklets originated in literacy classes. Such books may also have a useful function as textbooks in language tuition.

### *Conclusion*

Film and video can fulfill a useful function in relation to a number of important social problems and developments. Among these are such different matters, as the emancipation of women, the difficult position of cultural minorities, adult education, youth problems, health information and education. The great advantage of community media projects is that they tackle the problems in close contact with the groups concerned. This diminishes the gap between the programs presented and the everyday life of the people involved.

Integration of 'community media' with other activities seems to be essential in this respect. Multifunctional centres have the advantage of access to and transfer between activities and the flexible use of facilities. Media can serve, for instance, educational purposes and at the same time produce educative material that can be used by more groups. All this fails, however, where integration strangles the independent development of the relevant media.

A few years ago the main function of 'community media' was limited to service to the people concerned and at the most, to the neighbourhood. Currently, many productions are meant for a more expanded audience. Camerawork, for instance, a community photography project, operates a large number of itinerant expositions. Several community video projects have a video-library where tapes about various subjects can be hired. Some projects concentrate more on the quality that makes the programs accessible for a wider range of purposes and groups. There are less 'reports' and 'muckraking films', and more informative and educational films illustrating the background. Film and video have grown from a secundary means of action to an autonomous possibility for the imaginative visualisation of social problems.

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# ON GOVERMENT INFORMATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

J. Katus

## 1. *Introduction*

In an article published in Hungarian (Katus, 1983) I remarked that after the Second World War modernization in the Netherlands proceeded hand in hand - among others - with the growth of government information. In the following, various aspects of government information in this country will be discussed from the point of andragology.

It should be known in this connection that all ministries, provinces and many municipalities possess their own public information service. In a small community, just big enough to afford a public information organ of its own, this may have but a single employee. Large towns like Amsterdam, The Hague or Rotterdam naturally dispose of a much large staff. This applies equally to the public information divisions of the ministries. (Each minister in charge of a government department is responsible to the Parliament for the information policy, as for other policy matters, of the department.)

In 1983, the number of civil servants in public information work of the government departments was 983 and its budget for material expenses amounted in the same year to more than 76 million guilders (Bakker, 1983). Estimating the average salary as being 60.000 guilders per head, the total expenditure of the central government for public information amounts to about 135 million guilders. Moreover, the central government grants to bodies and organizations who deploy their own public information activities on, for instance, health. The cost of such public information activities not directly under the responsibility of a ministry, accrues to some 80 million guilders that should be added to the above sum (Rapport Werkgroep Heroverweging, 1984).

With regard to the methods used, one can distinguish roughly between direct and indirect public information. In indirect public information, the new media - newspapers, radio and television - play an autonomous mediating role. This means that the message sent out by the government information offices pass through journalistic filters with the possible consequence that they do not, or now wholly, reach the citizens. The fact that journalists judge the messages received by their news value plays a role in this. No news means no publication.

Many of the messages emanating from the government departments contain no news in the journalistic sense of the word, yet they may contain important messages for groups of citizens. As an example, let us refer to rent subsidy to people whose income is too low for the rent they have to cough up. They are approached by direct public information, although the department information services may at the same time make use of mass media to a limited extent. For instance, they can broadcast a brief spot on television, or buy space in the newspapers to have their message printed in full. (The Government has no general privileged access to television, radio or newspapers.) Moreover, the information divisions release their own films, folders and all sorts of publications. Also the citizens can obtain verbal information at ministries and municipalities.

In the last few years there has been a growing tendency to employ so-called intermediary agencies for government information. These can be, among others, district centres, interest groups, hobby clubs or social action groups. It is important that they should be relatively homogenous with the target groups and should have open channels of communication and relationship with them. Intermediary agencies can enhance the effectiveness of government information.

The strongly increased importance of government information in the Netherlands can be accounted for in a number of ways. Among them is the role public information plays in the introduction of innovations.

Given the present economic crisis, the government explicitly boasts the innovative capacity of trade and industry. Actually, government policy has something to do with solving of endogenous and/or exogenous problems, with the consequence that it is generally directed at introducing innovations in the society. Innovations usually cause cognitive uncertainty, to the reduction of which government information can genuinely contribute. An adequate system of government information might even be considered as one of the factors that contribute to what Kulcsár designated as the innovative capacity of society (Kulcsár, 1980, 259 and further).

## 2. *Unfamiliarity*

Relatively little attention has so far been paid, however, to government information from the point of andragology. This is remarkable, for at least two reasons.

First, public information in general is regarded as one of the andragogic working methods. In this respect, none of the fields has been explicitly excluded, and government information is one of the fields of public information. Second, as a rule, andragologists display much concern with the welfare state. This is obvious, bearing in mind that the welfare state permitted both theory and practice of andragogy to prosper. The various methods applied by the government for the promotion of individual and collective welfare are realized by andragologists. Still, the circumstance that government information is also one of its tools, escapes the attention of many.

Neither do information officers, on their part, show overwhelming interest in andragology. This is altogether strange, since Van der Haak (1972, 232) pointed more than ten years ago to the fact that government information can fail as a consequence of the lack of andragologic knowledge.

So far, the plea of Van der Haak to step up expert knowledge in the field of government information has not been met, as far as we know. This is partly due to the andragologists themselves. Love must come from both sides, but unfamiliarity breeds unbelovedness.

### 3. *The approach*

The andragological approach to which reference has been made comprised the intersection of historical and philosophical andragology.

The phenomenon public information, viewed from a historical perspective (Van Gent, 1973, 123 and further), permits the conclusion that public information is deeply rooted in Dutch culture. It is nourished by two sources: emancipation and assistance. In the past, the terms used may have been relief and neighbourliness, compassion, helpfulness, and others, but this is less important. The main issue is that in the past a means had been developed to help solve the problems people encountered, which received the name 'public information'.
The problems were manifold, but the lack of knowledge was invariably involved. For example, the lack of knowledge about more profitable farming methods, the lack of knowledge of developments in foreign countries important for trade, the lack of knowledge about sound living, about efficient housekeeping, about the market for goods and service. Accordingly, we can talk about public information on agriculture, on economics, on health, on domestic management, etc.
The question then arises as to what gives rise to public information. In this context, reference can be made to a link between

public information and problems (Katus, 1980, 218). Essentially, the link consists of problems generating public information, as public information is often used to solve problems. This may not always be sufficient, or the right solution, but that is a different story. Here, the mere fact is important that public information is a traditional means for solving problems, a means which has apparently proved useful in the course of time, and it is therefore still used.

The connection between problem and public information implies that when problems abound, much public information is required. This is so in our modern society, which is often called complex and dynamic, characterized by rapid changes which are apt to confront people with individual and collective problems. Here we come to the connection. Problems have more often than not hampered people in their acting.

## 4. *Acting*

The recently deceased student of philosophical andragology, A.J. Nijk, defined acting as intentional interaction with the environment that can be physical, as well as cultural. Acting may be 'conforming to given circumstances, obeying them, as well as altering or reconstructing the environment' (Nijk, 1978, 27). Acting refers to human beings, but not necessarily to any special quality in which they take action. It can thus be applied to the activity of a housewife, a farmer, a citizen, and so on.

Acting especially claims the attention of andragologists when it stagnates. They endeavour namely to help the removal of deadlocks by increasing the action potential. Andragology was, in fact, bred from the dissatisfaction with the 'inability to act, to taking adequate action, or with the taking of unsatisfactory action ...' (Nijk, 1978, 24).

The ability to act depends largely upon man's capacity to want to do something at all, to want to do something in particular, and to actually do what he wants. This ability is called action potential and it depends, in turn, on another ability called

narrative potential. This means the ability to verbally express an intention, with the due consideration and organization of alternatives.
But narrative potention is, as Nijk (1978, 126) says, no independent phenomenon. It is, for the most part, determined by 'the access a subject has to the narrative potential, inherent in a culture. At the rate which the narrative repertoire of a culture is less accessible to a subject who in other respects belongs to it, - e.g. as producer and/or consumer - the chance of his action potential failing at crucial points becomes greater'.
According to Nijk, the resolution of deadlocks in human activity is invariably accompanied by efforts to expand their narrative repertoire. The latter is surely a function of public information. Van Woerkum (1980, 181) points this out in stating about public information on science that this is capable of transmitting scientific notions into everyday language. 'To partake in a discussion about nuclear energy requires a large vocabulary, varying from 'fast reactor' to 'genetic deformation' '- he remarks, adding that public information on science fulfills this function, among other means.

Nijk himself does not explicitly discuss the function of public information with regard to expanding the narrative repertoire or, if you wish, vocabulary. Against this, he clearly mentions another function of public information (1978, 165). An action blockade may, according to him, follow from the fact that the action does not correspond with 'facts'. In order to be able to take adequate action, it is at least necessary to know the relevant facts.

## 5. *Conceptualization*

So far, we have been talking about public information rather loosely, leaving the reader free to interpret it as he wished. This, of course, he may keep doing. The author of this paper, however, prefers to tell his tale in terms of a vocabulary deriving from the public information science, which is a sub-discipline of andragology.

Public information science as such, was first admitted to the academic roster 1964, when Dr. Ing. A.W. van den Ban was appointed professor of this subject, and significantly at the Agrarian University of Wageningen. This was the result of a need, particularly in the agrarian sector, for scientifically founded public information. The new discipline was from the beginning rather strongly coloured by 'the green sector'. This may be the main reason why it took some time until its range lost its specific agrarian character. However, as early as 1955 Vogelaar had given with his work on government information a remarkable start to a broader range of the science of public information. Fauconnier (1973, 120) qualified this study as 'excellent'. Almost ten years later, he and Van der Meiden did not exclude the possibility that Vogelaar would be more widely appreciated and that his ideas would probe to be 'a most fruitful addition' to 'a frustrating and owing to puritanism polarized discussion' in the Netherlands regarding government information (Van der Meiden & Fauconnier, 1982, 44). The second part of this statement is, by the way, entirely the responsibility of these authors. In the following some remarks will be made on the discussion they criticised.

Vogelaar may have faded in the past somewhat into the background, yet his notions on public information in general definitely played a role in its conceptualization. The most influential authors in this respect are undoubtedly Van den Ban en Van Gent. The merit of the former is to have developed a body of knowledge concerning especially the process of public information. Van Gent, in turn, placed public information into an andragologic framework which lent greater relief to its general significance.

It may be said that the two last-named authors took the lead in the conceptualization of public information. In accordance with their concept (Van den Ban, 1982, 14; Van Gent, 1980, 9 and further), public information can be defined by taking into account five criteria, being: *assistance, growth of knowledge, limitedness, primacy of the client's interest, respect for the client's freedom.*

In greater detail, public information must be focused on assisting the client, by augmenting his existing knowledge. This is in contrast to, for example, advertising. Assistance is limited to the communicative level, and to a certain specific problem. This means that, for instance, subsidization does not come under public information and neither does education. In the former case, assistance consists of giving financial aid, and in the latter more is envisaged than helping people to solve concrete problems of every-day life. Assistance is used here in the sense of giving aid in combating - or preventing - problems. The prospective client is free to take advantage of the assistance or not as the case may be.

The primacy of the client's interest as formulated in the definition requires closer clarification of the interest, but it must also be weighted up against other interests. In any case, assistance is not unlimited. On one side, the limit lies there were action blocks are 'manifestly pathological', as Nijk (1978, 146) stated. On the other side, the limit was defined by Van Gent (1980, 18-19) to lie where the freedom and righteous interest of another person, group, community, etc., would be damaged by that of the client.

The accent must lie on the righteousness of the conflicting interests. In government information, in particular, it is not always easy to weigh the interest of the community against that of a certain group or person.

According to andragologists, a definite judgement on some interest is up to the person or group whose interest is at stake. This implies that it is the individual, group or community concerned that must have the last word, and that they are the supreme instance to state whether or not their interests are served. *Mutatis mutandis* this applies also to public information. Whether in a certain instance actual information is received, will be decided by the target persons or groups.

### 6. *Concept*

Bearing in mind the above criteria, public information may be considered *a form of social communication whereby it is systema-*

*tically endeavoured to transfer information with the purpose of enabling the recipient to form independent and conscious opinion or take decision respectively in a problem situation* (Katus, 1980, 226).

For a brief explanation, it should first be remarked that here, 'social communication' should not be seen as a mixture of advertising, propaganda, public relations and whatever else there may be. The term is used to indicate communication by a person in a specific social role to another person. The sociologists De Jager and Mok (1978, 96-97) describe such a role as more or less binding expectations with regard to the behaviour of the concerned actor. As an example they mention the installation of someone as chairman of a society. He is expected to behave like a chairman. Something similar can be said when a person is appointed as public information officer.

Another point meriting closer attention is information as such. Since the Netherlands have entered an era designated by this notion, 'information' has become a highly intriguing term, giving name to our information society. Now then, in the concept formulated by us, information is a basic notion. It means something that diminishes the cognitive uncertainty through communication. If no such uncertainty prevails, there can be no question of information (Moser, 1977, 59). This may sound somewhat exaggerated unless we ponder the difference between information and data. The latter are contained in books, documents, on the floppy-disk, etc., without being information in the sense used here. Data become information, however, if lifted out of their container, as it were by a tension field that may arise from the cognitive uncertainty of a person with a problem.

That problem can be purely theoretical, or empirical, in which case interaction between man and his environment - i.e. his action potential - is at stake.

Wersig (1973, 43) mentions the connection between perception of the environment, the actual amount of knowledge possessed, action and information. A person can act, as he says, because he observes his environment and makes a model out of it to which *'er mögliche Folgen seiner Handlungen in der Aussenwelt durchspielen kann'*. If, in spite of his knowledge, a person is at a loss what to do, his activity will be blocked and we have what is called a problem situation. In order to enable him to act, the person must know more about the environment. Whatever is increasing his relevant knowledge is called information.

Used in this sense, the notion of information has no slight implications. We agree with Wersig that information presupposes *effective communication*. Such effective communication does not mean persuasion of a person to do what he is told, but making him grasp what he is told. If he fails to understand the message, it will not come through, whereas it is in the message that the information may be contained.

Another condition for using the term information in our sense is that the message, once come through, contains *something new*. Things already known to the person in question constitute no information for him.

A third point is *relevance*. There is cognitive uncertainty with respect to a certain problem. Information diminishes such uncertainty. This implies that the message containing the information must be relevant for the problem. Messages for instance, concerning the courses at the Amsterdam stock exchange, will most likely have no relevance for an unemployed worker.

Lastly, we would comment on the complementarity of public information and education.

Increase of knowledge implicates the existence of a certain foreknowledge. Assistance in independent and conscious opinion-forming or decision-taking, presupposes will and ability of the client to do so. Nijk also mentions something like this when discussing action potential. Thus, in addition to a certain foreknowledge, a certain attitude and skill are required. Appropriating such knowledge, attitude and skill is a matter of instruction, forming and schooling briefly, of education. In other words, efficient public information requires a certain level of education (Katus, 1980, No.4).

The other way round also holds: people with a certain level of education cannot do without public information, for this makes it possible for them to break through blockades in various problem situations they meet during their life in different social roles and under variable circumstances.

The aforementioned verbal public information model may be called objective, for it is not specific of any particular field of work. It presents public information in general, as a phenomenon in society. Application of the model to a certain field of work can be instructive, for it can reveal the similarity and differences between theory and practice.
Regarding the application of the model to the field of government information, Van der Meiden and Fauconnier (1982, 44) state that it reveals remarkable things.

## 7. *Connection*

It is remarkable perhaps, that government information in the Netherlands originated somewhat earlier than some authors say. Generally, accounts on the origin of public information begin with the appointment of the first press officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1920. A possible explanation for this approach may be that students of mass communication and information officers with a journalistic record, view this field with a bias towards 'publicity', which is apt to distort their vision. Thus Hemels (1973, 9) states, for instance, that publicity is the most characteristic feature of a government information program. In his view, government information seems to be a special form of mass communication. The public information model described above does, however, not mention publication. It implies mass communication as well as face-to-face or group communication.

For the rest, Van der Haak (1972, 11) pointed out that government information cannot be entirely attributed to the fact that governments wanted to give shape to their press policy. Indeed, press policy plays a part here, which, at least historicaly, is not all too fine. Van der Haak namely claims that present-day public information is partly the continuation of centuries of authorities' meddling with public opinion. He alludes to censorship and other official repressive measures, to which the constitutional admission of the freedom of the press put an end in 1848, and to the abrogation of the newspaper stamp in 1869. (The latter was a kind of tax that raised the price of newspapers so that many could not afford to buy them.) These reforms freed the most important contemporary channels of social information from the direct influence of the authorities; the latter endeavoured to maintain the possibility of manipulating the information at their disposal. At a certain moment, the demand for regulation arose.

At that moment, however, public information on economics had already been current for a long time. This is perhaps the oldest sort of government information. It derives from consular reports such as they were introduced in the middle of the 17th century. The problem which generated public information in this field was that in an expanding world the traditional merchant newsletters no longer satisfied the demand of trade, shipping and industry in the Netherlands for information on relevant developments (Huffnagel, 1921, 11).

Yet, it does not make much difference for the connection between problem and public information whether we trace the beginnings of government information far into the past or remain in our era. The connection can be demonstrated both with regard to the central government and to lower administration. Rooij and Nieuwenhuis (1969, 25-26) rightly observed that on both levels government information was generated by problems.

## 8. *Partiality*

Another remarkable matter is partiality in discussions concerning government information, which seems to emanate from a kind of preoccupation with its political dimensions. The political dimensions of the government information deserves attention in every respect. In spite of the importance attached to it, it would be shortsighted to consider it exclusively. Vogelaar (1955, 255-26) already referred to this saying that at first sight, for democratically thinking men, government information was connected with a single problem, namely to know 'how to prevent or at least limit this dangerous government activity. With government information' - he went on - 'one is promptly inclined to suspect mental coercion, misleading of the masses, obstruction of the free expression of opinion'. He admitted that the history of the current century provides plenty of reason for this kind of associations of ideas. Moreover, in the Netherlands, which were subjected to German occupation during the last World War, people were strongly averse to Göbbelian propaganda. The emotional justification of negative associations does nevertheless not mean that they were reasonably justified. Vogelaar did not want to deny that the combination of public information and political power harboured dangerous potentials. Yet, he preferred to have a clear picture of reality, for only then could one face the risks. And he did not think it impossible that one of the risks should be that 'led by blind emotional aversion and suspicion, government information should be assined an inadequate task and possibility for development ...' (Vogelaar, 1955, 27).

It would be exaggerating to state that preoccupation with the political dimension underlying government information has to do with blind emotional aversion and suspicion. One should rather think of a sound tendency of the citizens to confine the growing power of the state. They obviously realise that by 'public information', the power of the state would keep growing.
Herein lies perhaps the roots of the 'frustrating discussions' mentioned above: a discussion among information officers concern-

ing the limits of government information. But it is anything but frustrating: it is necessary for clarifying the values involved in public information and is therefore important for the quality of our society.

### 9. *Two dimensions*

This appears, among other things, from the reports of the state committees Van Heuven Goedhart and Biesheuvel. The former was set up in 1946 and outlined the principles according to which government information was to develop. It had only to 'elucidate' the government's policy, and to do that complementary to the work of Parliament and press. Namely, especially during the years of the war, people had developed, as already said, an allergy against official propaganda. As the committee pointed out, propaganda was not to be administered to the citizens, except when truly national issues would justify it. In its public information, the government had to show restraint in matters of politically controversial issues. The government had to refrain from educating the citizens to obedient and submissive subjects, as well (Comm. Van Heuven Goedhart, 1946, 9-11).

The Committee Biesheuvel was set up more than twenty years later to deliberate on government information. It followed the line of the Committee Van Heuven Goedhart on the understanding that for the younger commission, government information meant not merely explanation, but publication, elucidation, and clarification of government policy. It too bore in mind the political dimension of government information, however, explicitly narrowing its scope.

According to the Committee Biesheuvel it made almost no sense to talk of government information, unless a distinction was made from the outset, between at least two sorts according to their respective social functions. The Dutch have, as the Committee points out, a twofold interest in government information: as citizens and as subjects. 'As citizens, they need the data based on which they can approve or disapprove of government policy ....

As subjects of a modern state, the people of the Netherlands have to do with a number of rules and regulations to which they are subjected or from which they can derive profit. They are subject to compulsory schooling, military service, tax payment. They profit by health care facilities and various subsidies. They have a right to social security benefits and financial aid. The number of rules and provisions has become so large that the common citizen requires public information to find his way' (Comm. Biesheuvel, 1970, 6).

The vision of the Committee Biesheuvel may be designated as holistic on government information, for it has a political and a social dimension. Its value is not diminished by the fact that the report of the Committee handles government information as a political problem. It considers men and women acting as citizens and as subjects.

Such a holistic view on government information is also found in the works of scholars who studied government information. Dekker (1980, 187) discerned, however, signs of stagnation in the construction of a theoretical framework of government information early in the 80's. Nevertheless, Vogelaar (1955), Dekker himself (1969), and Van der Haak (1972) had already contributed remarkable ideas to such a theory.

### *10. Welfare state*

The authors mentioned above, discussed variations on the subject of the welfare state, and in the work of the two latter ones the topic even predominated. This may perhaps be due to the fact that they worked in a fairly advanced welfare state, and that their studies were related.

For Vogelaar, welfare state was still, for the most part, a dream of the future. But as early as in 1955, he realized that growing government interference would be coupled with intensified attempts at influencing people's minds and their actions. In many respects growing state interference seems to have prompted some of Vogelaar's contemporaries to talk about 'government propaganda' and 'police state'. This may be the reason that Vogelaar referred to shallow critics who drew premature conclusions from the developments witnessed. Official propaganda, in the sense of public information to persuade the people, was necessary 'as soon as the authorities interfere with the actions of their citizens and to the extent they do this. What the government can achieve by persuasive public information, can be spared in control and legal coercion ...' (Vogelaar, 1955, 96).

As said above, in the work of Dekker and Van der Haak the topic of the welfare state predominates. Now that we find ourselves in an economic crisis in the first half of the 1980's, which threatens the welfare state with erosion, it might be helpful to signal that notably Dekker (1969, 31) stated that state care is not a matter of prosperity. He claimed that the responsibility of the state as 'over-all provider' should remain undiminished in a slump in prosperity, what is more the demand for care and planning was likely to increase under such circumstances.

Besides legislation, Dekker saw government information as one of the government's instruments to realise its policy. Also, he considered it as a function of government information to render the citizen able to participate consciously in government policy (Dekker, 1969, 493-494). Van der Haak, in his turn, discriminated between 'government information as a means of public relations', as press policy, and government information in the interest of the client (Van der Haak, 1972, 16). Most definitions of government information bore only on one of these two alternatives. This does not hold for Dekker's definition, according to which it is the 'independent or stimulated despatch by the government of information mostly meant for the public directly to the citizen(s) (Dekker, 1969, 39; Van der Haak, 1972, 17).
Also Van der Haak (1972, 17) discerned two social functions for government information. Where it is treated as a form of press policy, its function consists in stimulation 'opinion forming about the course of things in our society, including public

administration ... (social control). Government information in the interest of the client' envisages 'giving practical information in aid of the behaviour of the recipient (socialization)'.

In the light of the above definition of public information it can be said that both in the 'official' ideology, as conceived in the report of the Committee Biesheuvel, and in the specific theoretical formulation, the notion of stimulating the people's acting by means of information is found back. As said, the people have a two-fold quality, namely that of citizen and of subject. Accordingly, one might talk about stimulation of their political or their social respectively. In both cases, this involves assistance. In this light it can be concluded that government information in theory fulfills the central ethical criterion characteristic for public information.

## *11. Testing*

Nevertheless, the question arises whether government information does or does not help in practice. With our model in mind, it seems that such a question must be asked of the citizen. It is up to him to judge what government information is worth to him.
A remarkable thing comes to light here: in the Netherlands the authorities reserve to themselves the right to dertermine what is and what is not information. Could it be that they have no need for independently thinking citizens who could test government information and spear their mind about it?

Projection of our public information model reveals - according to Van der Meiden and Fauconnier - remarkable things. 'There are information officers who are just 'salesmen', sales managers of industrial sites, of events, town promoters, promoters of ministers and mayors, image-builders, policy defenders against campaigners, political secretaries, lobbyists defending municipal interest against the provinces and the central government. There are information officers who must sell particular attitudes (concerning for instance energy saving, preventive health care), making use of advertizing and marketing techniques, they even attend training courses to maximally step up the results of their influencing activities'. And they mention here that information officers dispute the question whether public information is merely elucidation of the policy of government instances without persuasion, or whether it is something more that 'not only defende official policy but also ... influences it' (Van der Meiden & Fauconnier, 1982, 42).

Well, it is an index of the quality of the Dutch society - which otherwise leaves much to improve - that civil servants carry on debates concerning what they pass on to the citizens as information on behalf of their employer. Yet, this is the privilege of a small group that, for the rest, can be divided into two schools, namely into 'puritans' and 'technocrats'. Although some of them - like Houwaart and Schoenmakers, heads of the information departments of the Ministries of the Interior and of Housing, Regional Planning and Environment respectively - do not eschew publicity, this discussion seems rather more like an intimate party. Unlike information officers of lower administration, departmental information officers have no association that might publicize their problems and opinions via symposia, in periodicals, and other publications. Seemingly, the information officers in The Hague do their jobs in a kind of obscurity.

Remarkable things require attention. Here it seems advisable to pay attention to developments in the field of government information in general, but also to the factors underlying such developments. It is feasible that the 'salesmen' of Van der Meiden and Fauconnier can have their way, because politicians and/or departmental chiefs find it acceptable - perhaps even desirable. Maybe they definitely disagree with Erich Fromm, who warned for the detrimental consequences for democracy of the 'sales techniques derived from advertizing and public relations' (Fromm, 1971, 99; 1982, 141, 225).

Fromm seems to have been mainly alarmed by the trend of things in the United States, where they had towards the end of the 70's Great Bureaucratic Propaganda Machine that swallowed a lot of money. Those who cannot muster admiration for the Machine, can learn a lesson from the fate of Philip G. Vargas, chairman of a work group of the Commission on Federal Paperwork. A report of his work group, that probable spoke in no flattering terms about the Machine, was not published. When Vargas insisted on publication, he was fired (Lang, 1979).

The Netherlands are not the United States, but sometimes the authorities here also do mysterious things with research reports, the publication of which would at that moment be inopportune in the eyes of high political or administrative officials. This was signalled, for instance, by Melgert (1980), 254-255). In the view of the Royal Dutch Academy of Science, such secrecy is unpermittable when research is financed from public funds (KNAW, 1981, 6). The report of a study concerning the relation between publicity agency and government (SRM, 1979), is probably no exception in this respect. It was namely partly financed from public funds. The study was set up to trace frictions in the relation between the government and private publicity agencies in order to 'render it as optimal and efficient' as possible. The purpose is comprehensible, all the more as the state is the biggest client of advertizing agencies in the Netherlands (Adformation, 1981).

### *12. Breakpoint*

In this light, no wonder that the 'puritan' Houwaart (1980, 8.5-2) is worried about trespassing upon the limits of 'classical' government information. His solicitude is due to the very broad interpretation of the Law on government publicity of 1978, in which the citizen's right to information was principally recognized. Specifically, Houwaart is worried by the growth of 'persuasive public information'.

Such developments require closer attention, without, however, jumping to any premature conclusions. An apt parallel might be the growth of the country's bureaucracy to an imposing 'Fourth Power'. Crince Le Roy is not very pleased with stigmatizing the civil service by bandying about the term Fourth Power. It is all right to use it to suggest unlawful manifestation of power. In the Netherlands, however, there is no such thing as usurpation by the bureaucracy of power (Crince Le Roy, 1976, 11, 107). This is also asserted by Van Putten (1980, 278). The rise of the Fourth Power is namely due to an evolution on our notions about the duties of the state.

It is not impossible that our notions about the informative tasks of the government will take a similar trend. Whether, and in how far, evolution keeps abreast with our ideas on the matter, must yet be seen on closer scrutiny.

This applies also to the question whether or not government information contributes appreciably to the acting potential of the people, either as citizens or as subjects. For the time being, the effectivity of government information in our sense of the word is still an open question in both respects. A study by the Commission of Evaluation of the Law on Publicity gives little reason to be optimistic about the improvement of the government information, and less so when information about the Law itself is qualified as deficient (Evaluatie WOB, 1981, 43-51; 1982, 78-82).

Regarding government information, Van der Haak (1972, 208-211) already pointed out existing shortcomings, and as a remedy he pleaded for increasing expert knowledge at the information departments by engaging the services of andragologists specialized in public information. This in addition to know-how and experience in the journalistic field. But still in the eighties 'it seems that the responsible officers never heard of the specific demands which an information officer must meet' (Voorlichting, 1982). This casts doubts upon the policy of staff employment in this field.

Closer scrutiny might bring to light some remarkable things, in particular with respect to the appointment of heads of departmental information divisions, such as: obvious preference of the responsible officials for journalists, especially for those whose clever features are familiar from the TV. It may even be that if backed by some political party, the features of the candidate seem even more clever. It may be the result of more of these remarkable events that, some ten years after Van der Haak had signalled the above mentioned shortcomings, Schoenmakers (1980, 144) confirmed them by observing that government information services with their traditional approach fell short when it came to implementing the policy of centre-left as well as centre-right cabinets, a policy 'more and more intensely concerned with the most bachward groups in our society ...'.

In the light of the above, government information itself demands thorough political scrutiny. In this context, there are other arguments to consider that can be partially found in the report on Coherent Media Policy of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR, 1982). The report was compiled following a request by the government for advice, as a result of uneasiness about the effect of the progress of electronic revolution in various fields. The request for advice is most commendable. It is, however, astonishing that the government does not in the least seem to be aware that the developments in question 'concern the very core of government information', as Schoenmakers puts it. He spotted another remarkable matter, namely that government advisors are not at all concerned with policy developments involving the future infrastructure of government information. 'From the aspect of government information, they did not even begin to take a stand' - says Schoenmakers, adding that where involvement of the government information is concerned, it is based on 'outdated and erroneously interpreted conclusions of the Committees Van Heuven Goedhart ... and Biesheuvel respectively'. In his criticism he does not spare the Scientific Council for Government policy, for its shortsightedness as regards government information (Schoenmakers, 1982).

Schoenmakers would have been more accurate when he would have criticised the lack of a coherent government information policy. He correctly pointed out that the ideas concerning government information from 1946 and from the second half of the 1960's had become in part obsolete, for they reflected the social background just after the war and the political democratisation during the 1960's.
Much has changed in the Netherlands since the work of the Committee Biesheuvel. Also, due to the electronic revolution, among others, we are facing rapid changes. Government information is at a breakpoint between two eras. A name has already been coined for the period on the threshold of which we find ourselves: the era of the information society.

## 13. *Information society*

In the history of the post-war Netherlands, government information enjoyed no little political interest at similar breakpoints. The Committee Van Heuven Goedhart was brought into existence in 1946, when after its liberation the country entered upon a new era. The time between the Committees Van Heuven Goedhart and Biesheuvel was a period - according to Van Doorn (1973, 32) - of reconstruction, industrialization, rising prosperity and ever louder claims for democracy. Also the Committee Biesheuvel was set up owing to the realization that drastic changes were at hand.

Since the publication of the Biesheuvel report in 1970, as mentioned above, the face of Dutch society has undergone significant changes in many respects. We have to fight many, at times rather complicated problems, which were discerned by only a few more than a decade ago. Problems connected, for instance, with the economic crisis, with the fact that among other reasons, due to immigration of Africans and Asians, the Dutch society has grown to be culturally even more pluriform than it had traditionally been, with the aging of the population, and once more with the consequences of the information technology.

The latter development alone gives reason enough for the government to consider a coherent media policy. Still, its vision on the future should not be confined to the technological aspects of government information. At the same time, the philosophy underlying the government's communication with the citizens in an information society needs to be thoroughly reconsidered. The name information society is borrowed from what has grown to be the basis of power. For, as in the agrarian society it was the possession of land, and in the industrial society the possession of capital that provided the few with the power to rule over many, in the information society command over information has a similar role. At the same time, individual welfare depends for the most part of the extent in which one can acquire information about the society to which he belongs.

To illustrate the significance of information for individual and/or collective welfare, it has even been postulated that if Karl Marx was our contemporary, he would not write about *Das Kapital* but about *Die Information* (Ploman, 1981).

Government information is important, for it is concerned with power, both in the political meaning as well as in the sense of the ability of the people to arrange their lives in a satisfactory manner, as far as possible,

The importance of government information is all the greater since the government is the foremost producer and/or possessor of social and political information. Ethical, efficient and effective government information must be considered of crucial importance for a democratic spreading of social and political information. An ethical and competent government information, however, requires a coherent and clearly outlined policy.

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# CULTURAL ENTERPRISES, OR NEW WAYS OF POPULARIZING NATURAL SCIENCE

Vilmos Kiszel

The Institute for Culture at Budapest has only one person dealing with public information on science and technology, so it relies significantly on assistance of the public to maintain activity in the field. The Institute and the Göncöl Association have entered a advantageous contract of mutual benefit which states that the Association shall experimentally test the ideas produced by the Institute before their introduction on a larger scale.

The theory behind this is that we look upon culture itself as a process, but treat particular cultural products as commodities. In our view, the production and consumption of cultural products takes place in a multitude of self-regulating economic-cultural circular processes which are linked, with one built upon the other, and which form an open chain of effects. If certain environmental conditions are fulfilled, the basic circular processes will be reproduced by a special kind of automatic development. We shall now examine five apparently simple activities of the kind outlined, which may be called 'cultural enterprises'.

It is a vital point that there should be a demand for the cultural product that emerges from the circular processes, and that in the course of the production process individual and group interest should evolve, which will secure autonomous development after a few cycles. It must be noted that apart from the self-esteem of professionals, no regulating mechanism could as yet be found, which would keep cultural products above a certain level, let alone a self-regulating mechanism; furthermore, it seems that given the sample used in the experiment, we are not likely to find one in the near future.

1. *Computer Study Circle*, divided into three main topics:

- training base;
- software house;
- service.

Our activities to further computer literacy were started with the acquisition of hardware and privately arranged courses. At present, we have elementary and advanced courses in applications and programming. The fees allowed us to invest seriously in expansion, employing a number of experts to start a software service. This software house is presently making the first major contracts with Hungarian computer producers and salesmen. This will involve software that would serve mainly adult education and everyday culture. This should place the enterprise on a firm financial foundation and allow for an independent future. Once those contracts have been signed, we will be able to establish a computer workshop for cultural institutions.

2. *Crafts Hostel*

The village of Pénzesgyör lies in the backwoods of Hungary, situated in the Bakony mountains, where we are reconstructing two peasant houses in the style of 300 and 400 years ago, at minimal costs, due to the selfless work of our members. (In due time they will use one of the houses for their work). The houses will be furnished and equipped for guests to engage in activities both out of doors and in the village in a traditional fashion, as well as in ways suited to contemporary Hungarian tastes. We will offer the necessary equipment (furnaces, pails, potter's wheels, wooden ploughs, telescopes, microscopes, chemicals, etc.), descriptions (cookery-books, know-how, technology, maps, catalogues, identification handbooks, suggested measurements, etc.). The visitors at the hostel, who can number up to 60, will also have specialists laid on for their use. On the basis of places booked in advance and foreseeable costs (including necessary maintenance and expansion), we calculate that we will be able to run the two houses without a deficit or perhaps even at a slight profit.

### 3. *Environment protection*

Following in the steps of the former boy scout movement, we are making efforts to establish an environment protection movement for young people. We have been organizing self-supporting camps in more and more places in the country over the past three years. This year we have started to organize leader training camps and to collect the available experience.

### 4. *Publications*

Monthly and quarterly issues are published for amateur astrologists, meteorologists and astrophotographers, which contain observations made by amateurs, guides, maps and other aids, not to mention work summarizing, analyzing and evaluating observations and theoretic studies. These publications are edited and financed by the amateurs themselves. This year they decided to establish a central library from their own resources. At the end of 1984 they launched *'Süni Magazin'*, a scientific magazine for young people, also intended to be self-supporting. The publication of the first four or five numbers seems guaranteed, however, whether or not profitable circulation can be maintained in the long run under the present circumstances, is impossible to predict.

### 5. *Leisure Centre*

In the unused water tower on Margarete Island, one of the most attractive places in Budapest, we are planning to establish a leisure centre, modelled on culture houses. We have launched the enterprise with considerable contributions from private capital. It will be in use from the summer of 1986 and will recover costs within four years. At present we are preparing the documentation of the plans, and negotiations are in progress both with the organization that will deal with the investment and with the other one which will run the centra; furthermore, a western partner with capital of $300.000 is being sought.

The outside of the tower has been renovated by the City Council and the water basin has been removed. After its interior reconstruction thw tower will offer the following services:

- look-out tower;
- video planetarium and cinema;
- panorama snackbar;
- computer room;
- other, usual services.

Managing cultural enterprises of the kinds listed on whatever scale, is a novelty for us. By studying them, and familiarizing ourselves with the general rules governing their functioning, we hope to contribute to the popularization of the autonomous cultural processes of the kind discussed.

# CONTRADICTIONS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ANIMATION AND ADULT EDUCATION IN HUNGARY

Andor Maróti

It is a recommended approach, in the search for solutions to problems in a certain field to examine the contradictions involved. In the process one uncovers the practices involved, where the major interests lie, what has been achieved, and what has hindered progress: furthermore, one may be able to predict future directions and targets.

Before embarking on a discussion of the present-day contradictions of socio-cultural animation in adult education in Hungary, we have to insert a few explanatory notes on interpretations of these concepts in this country.

The concept of ***socio-cultural animation*** is rather old, but it has only been in official use for the last 15 years or so, replacing ***cultural animation***. The latter meant ***cultural education outside the school***, but was, in fact, usually limited to the activities of cultural centres. The majority of these were created in the 1950's to improve the cultural level of the whole country. They did not specialize in any particular cultural field, but publicized achievements of the arts and sciences, offered useful knowledge, developed practical skills; furthermore, they became the foci of entertainment and social life. They were of greater significance in villages, minor towns and the outer districts of larger towns where, except for a school, a library and a cinema, there were no cultural facilities. Created to promote on a wide scale the ***fruits of culture***, their programmes were aimed at attracting the masses, and took as their point of reference, the demands and cultural levels of the culturally less refined. From the mid-sixties onwards achievements tended more and more to fall short of intentions. The decrease in attendance was explained by the increasing popularity of television, however, it was to emerge later that the problem had social and political causes as well.

While political power in the 1950's looked upon *cultural animation* as one of the *instruments of propaganda*, in the sixties as politics and culture became divorced from one another, individual preference acquired the senior role. Although increased satisfaction of wishes would not have lessened the attendance at cultural centres it strongly encouraged people to opt for entertainment rather than teaching, or at least for the teaching of subjects relevant to their lives. However, cultural centres were not up to this task. Teaching practical things presupposes a lot of equipment, facilities, among other things and entertainment also involves quite an investment in appearances. With their relatively limited equipment, facilities and furniture, cultural centres were not able to enter this sphere.

At the beginning of the 1970's the leaders of cultural policy began to realize that in order to develop the general cultural level *all cultural institutions have to co-operate*. And this made it also necessary to find a concept which will cover the activities of all involved, and at the same time suggests that the co-operation must prevail not only in the imparting of culture, but in the *development of cultural refinement* as well. Thus, 'socio-cultural animation' came to replace 'cultural animation', placing the stress, with its reference to the social aspect, on the 'self-education' of those participating in the process of cultural refinement rather than on 'education' or 'development'. 'Socio-cultural animation' in this sense means the relation of the members of society to culture, the changing of that relation and the mutual influencing of people in the interest of a more refined education, or culture. Socio-cultural animation is commonly presumed to include only the work of institutions, their activity as organizers or programmes, and the effects of that activity. However, we think the concept *embraces* the spontaneous *cultural influences* emerging in everyday practice because in socio-cultural animation what is important is not the conscious imparting of culture, but the actual outcome and effects of this. That is why it is more and more widely realized that *the vital point in the promotion of cultural values is participation - the very activity itself*. This is not only a methodological issue, but also concerns the *democratic quality* of the social processes; it is practically synonymous with the question how far the people wishing to make cultural progress are able to step out of their role as an 'audience', and how far they are able to take the initiative and act as organizers in the social exchange of cultural components.

The concept of socio-cultural animation was used at the time of the 1976 Act on Public Education by professionals and administrators in a broad sense. In spite of this it still tends to be used, even by educated people in a restricted sense referring to cultural centres. A wider interpretation included public libraries and museums as well and sometimes even all the institutions that relay culture. The concepts of 'public education as schooling' and of 'socio-cultural animation' for education outside school are generally used side by side. In theoretical writings public education and vocational training or political i.e. functional education not organized in schools can also appear as part of socio-cultural animation, in which case the latter is extended to embrace all aspects of cultural development.

It is only in this account of the subject that 'adult education' or 'education for adults' has been treated as an integral part of socio-cultural animation, which shows that it is qualitatively different from the education of children and adolescents. Otherwise the concept of *vocational training* or *instruction* is treated as separate from socio-cultural animation. Evening and,correspondence courses are assumed to be a part of public education organized in schools and vocational courses to belong to the necessities of the economy, while political training is looked upon as part of the functioning of organizations. The training of directors of economic units and of political officials are also run on a similar educational line. The concept of socio-cultural animation is applied only to the development of culture or education in the broad sense as pursued outside schools during people's spare time in such subjects as general science or language teaching.

We have listed only the major branches of adult education, but it is sufficient to demonstrate how *heterogeneous* the field is *in terms of organization*. (And we have omitted such aspects as health education, study circles of local history or sociography, ethnographic study circles, practical courses such as in driving, radio amateurs' groups, military education, courses on the penal system and so on.) The concept of 'adult education' embracing these branches tends to appear in theoretical works only; in real life 'adult education' is usually used to refer to education organized in schools. The other branches are referred to by mention of the particular subject in question.

We hope our explanation of the concept expresses our *disapproval of the lack of a unified interpretation of these concepts* and our view of the *lack of co-ordination between the branches* as problematic. These views are grounded not merely in the belief that the standardization of the concepts concerned is indispensable and that the separation of branches, simply on account of their being different, is harmful. However, experience tells us time and again that the conceptual disturbance obstructs the exchange of opinions even in professional circles, and the advantages of co-operation are often disregarded on spurious grounds by the parallel functioning of the branches. We smile at the cases - luckily not frequent - where a cultural centre and a library housed in the same building brick up their common entrance for the reason that they disturb each other's functioning. These 'walls', however, can be found in the minds of many professionals as well. A similar situation prevails in adult education at firms, workshops and factories, where there are separate sections organizing vocational courses and non-vocational cultural programmes and none of them would think the two kinds of activity should somehow harmoniously complement each other. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that it is those organizing vocational courses and further training at work places who also send workers to evening and correspondence classes for primary, secondary and further public education outside the work place, so the division of labour is determined by how particular cases are treated - in a formal or informal manner -, which shows that it is formal and organizational factors rather than considerations of content that decisively influence segregation.

This also involves a characteristic contradiction inherent in socio-cultural animation as practiced in Hungary: the gap between the *goals* formulated, in terms of ideas and content, and the *formality of real practice*. This means that institutions of socio-cultural animation in their plans set lofty goals like 'raising the demand for culture', 'creating modern culture', 'strengthening of the socialist view of the world and of socialist morality', 'broadening of thinking and activities in public life', 'development of public taste', etc. These are expressedly *educational* goals. In order to reach them, it needs to be defined where is their *starting point*, along with *what* should be done and *how*. Instead, the schedule of programmes is only broadly adjusted to the goals, containing only occasional programmes instead of a systematic building up in a cumulative process. It is the organizational form that comes first (lectures, exhibitions, evenings with entertainment, study circle sessions); this determines the content and only then are possible audience assessed instead of the opposite method of starting out from the people they want to influence with a particular purpose in mind.

It is no great wonder, then, that goals in the plans are only to prove that the work is serious and valuable. In fact, however, they remain empty slogans, where realization 'can be proved', or rather, cannot be disproved. (Who can ascertain whether or not cultural levels have really been raised or cultural demands become more intense?)

The measurement of *effectiveness* is naturally limited to statistics representing the *quantitative attendance data* and to the number of cultural programmes offered. That is to say, a lecture, 'is' effective if a lot of people have attended; a library works 'well' if it has a large readership on its cards. The real results of cultural activity are completely omitted from considerations and those employed in socio-cultural animation are rewarded chiefly on account of their skill as organizers. Accordingly the central preoccupation, from their point of view, can be formulated as follows: how can they 'make people attend' their programmes? This tendency is encouraged also by budgetary considerations of of cultural activity.

We might believe this applies only to managers and organizers at institutions and think that the leaders of courses, lectures, leaders of study circles and art groups have a different attitude. This is, indeed, partly true. Yet the aim to *develop* is rare, even with these people. Most experts activily engaged in the field think in terms of *mediating culture*, imparting knowledge, skills etc., and pay almost no attention at all to whether or not the addressee does in fact acquire mastery of the knowledge and skills imparted. This approach to education that embraces concern with reception can be found almost exclusively within courses and study circles that work together over a longer period, but on the level of institution leadership such changes are hardly even noted. What counts there is how many courses, circles and so forth are run and how 'well' they work.

The practice that arises from this conventionalist thinking leads to the curious "result" that in the end its agents do not know what to do with problems of socio-cultural animation - do not know how to solve them. They do perceive these problems but disclaim competence in solving them. We speak apologetically of the fact that many unskilled workers or young mothers on babycare allowance have not even finished the basis 8 years of primary school, and that the advantageous studying opportunities (locally organized lessons, extra consultations), they are offered achieve little success, with only a few registering. The only response from the organizers of cultural programmes is: 'it would be good, if more people grasped the opportunity'. However, it is only natural that such wishes will not be fulfilled without initiatives well organized psychologically as well as methodologically.

We think that as long as *people* do not replace *programmes* as the *guiding principle* of organizational thinking, cultural programmes cannot be turned to good account. Making the *people* the guiding principe should not, however, be restructed to the taking into consideration of real cultural levels, objective needs, resulting from social position, and subjective wishes lying behind the interests; it should also include efforts to change the existing form of 'give and take' in the institutions of socio-cultural animation. That is to say, the person wishing to develop culturally should not be a mere 'audience' of cultural programmes but a *participant actively shaping* the cultural programmes; and this activity should include not only the raising and solution of problems but planning and participation in organization as well.

Paragraph 6 of the Act on Public Education declares that 'the activity of socio-cultural animation shall be based upon all-round social co-operation, and upon the spontaneity, initiative, and active participation of citizens and their communities'; it adds that the state 'assists and encourages' communities formed with the purpose of socio-cultural animation. However, real practice shows a different picture. Those employed at state and trade union institutions make no efforts to 'socialize' their practice because they think the planning and organizing of cultural opportunities is their exclusive task. In some institutions they are even jealous of non-officially organized social initiatives and look upon these as competitors, or, even worse, as manifestations of oppositional feeling; they fail to realize that in the final analysis an acceptance of social forces would make it easier for them to get their activity accepted by the people, not to mention the simple truth that without acceptance by the public socio-cultural animation can never become a *matter of public interest*.

The Act of Public Education also declares, in paragraph 4, that it is a 'civil right and, at the same time, a duty of *every* citizen, to himself and to society, to participate - according to his ability, qualifications and interest - in socio-cultural animation'. However, this intention is, as yet, very far from becoming real: not because it is too utopian but becayse institutions and organizations treat the organizations of socio-cultural animation as a problem falling into one particular province (only functionaries charged with it are responsible for it); furthermore, the kind of culture offered is, in many cases, a far cry from the *real needs of everyday life* and the problems that need solving. And if the people do not experience this culture as an organic part of their lives - as an instrument of a qualitative improvement in their lives, and just 'something do to in your spare-time', as is voiced by an increasing number of people nowadays - then they are not going to consider it essential to spend part of their time on it.

All this discord can only be resolved in our opinion with the help of *well-trained experts of socio-cultural animation*, who understand that their primary task is to develop *democracy* in socio-cultural animation, programming, regulating, and co-ordinating the activity of social forces. Professional training in socio-cultural animation has been given for almost 25 years at universities and colleges of higher education in Hungary. Nevertheless, the work of trained experts makes little impression at the level of actual practice. Of course, it is not an easy job to match both theoretical and practical, or pragmatic, requirements in a field of activity in which there had been no previous research or professional training. However, the main problem is a different one: it is that local authorities running the institutions often still do not insist on expertise in this field. They prefer to appoint, even to leading posts, locally known persons even if they have no qualifications. What is more, qualification in socio-cultural animation is sometimes even a bad recommendation. This serves to ensure that there will be no understanding between the wishes of local leadership and professionally reasonable action. Thus the professionalization of socio-cultural animation promises in vain to solve contradictions emerging in its approach. It finds itself in a contradictory situation, so contradictory in fact that many of the best trained are trying to find work in another corner of cultural life less plagued with sharp conflicts.

However, local leadership is not the only one to doubt the professional nature of jobs in socio-cultural animation; intellectuals are also unwilling to accept that this sort of activity requires a degree, partly because they tend to identify it with the old type of 'popular education', and partly for the reason that they think simply of organisational skill in socio-cultural animation and presume that competence in their particular field is sufficient for an expert to give popularizing lectures. The reaction of an increasing number of those trained in socio-cultural animation to this trend is that they are trying to reach provinces of cultural life which promise greater prestige. Hardly any of those with a university degree, especially once regular students, go to cultural centres, factory cultural committees or village cultural institutions.
Thus the administration concludes, from time to time, that perhaps it is pointless to train experts for this job, at least at

universities where students just 'keep theorizing'. Instead, they say, we should train clever and enthusiastic organizers, or managers (at the more practical high schools, or through courses), who do not want to upset the present practice in socio-cultural animation but are able to devise attractive programmes with regularly high attendance.

And this brings our line of contradictions back in a 'vicious circle': socio-cultural animation thus returns to its basic contradiction: that of subordinating its goals to the forms of organization, of identifying cultural development with 'physical presence' at the programmes offered. We think that this is a sign of the 'alienation' of the mediation of culture, a reversal of relations in which means become goals and the original goals are eclipsed.

# ADULT EDUCATION AND THE TRADE UNIONS

László Maróti

The level of schooling and public culture was very low in Hungary after World War II. No more than 15% of the adult population had received the full eight years of primary school education, 4% had attended secondary schools, and 1.6% got further education.

After the establishment of socialist society, one began to make attempts to change this backwardness as early as the end of the 1940's with the introduction of several important measures. Schools were nationalized, school attendance was made compulsory up to the age of 16, a system of evening and correspondene classes was organized at each level of schooling to further the education of skilled workers, and specialist training was also reorganized. As a result, the above percentages rose to 65% (primary school), 23% (secondary school), and 6.5% (higher education) by 1980. Compulsory school attendance is achieved in 98.8% of pupils, 95.6% of those who begin school finish their education successfully every year. 46.5% of primary school pupils go on to secondary school, while 43.6% go on to specialist training schools.

The statistics offer an impressive picture of the achievements. This progress reflects the efforts of four decades in which evening and correspondence education for adults has played a significant part. 300,000 or so adults have finished primary school during this period, and 450,000 have completed secondary school. However, we have achieved the greater part of these results in the '50's and '60's, since when applications for evening and correspondence classes have gradually decreased.

This change can be briefly explained by the following facts. First, even skilled workers can often be employed only on a level below their qualifications. Second, the extended opportunities for private enterprise - and the higher wages involved - turn people's attention towards work and away from the acquiring of knowledge or further training. The decline in living standards also motivates people to try to get supplementary income after work, i.e. in what was formerly their spare-time.

The trade union movement in Hungary has always seen it as one of its main tasks to safeguard and represent the interests of its members and to educate them. Education and the safeguarding of interests, the two basic functions of trade unions, are closely related in the safeguarding of cultural interests. This means not only that a trade union safeguards and represents the cultural interests of its members and supports their demands for cultural development; it also means that, with members who have a lower cultural level, confined to the consumption of mass cultural products, trade unionists try to help them to recognize their higher cultural interests. The trade union professes that it is in the interest not only of individuals but of the society as well that people study continiously, develop culturally, that they get to know and internalize the values culture can offer.

The management and development of adult education in Hungary is the task of the state, but in fact, the trade union assists it actively, in harmony with its creed.

The national economy in Hungary is organized for the most part in the form of state-owned firms in each of which the trade union plays a significant part in the management. So it has had, from the very start, the opportunity to win many thousands of people over to adult education (mainly at primary and secondary levels) by means of explanatory and educational campaigns. It has succeeded in getting state decrees that guarantee both study-leave for adults wanting further education and reimbursement of the costs incurred through travel. Also as a consequence of trade union influence, firms introduced the rule that those studying at school should work on favourable shifts. Those who successfully finish school are usually rewarded, and those on a low income who have to buy books and other school equipment receive special financial support.

Another achievement of the trade unions was the modification of the system of adult education: reduced study time was introduced which makes it possible to complete particular primary school classes in shortened form in a few months. Private examination is also allowed at every school level.

One of the greatest services of the trade union council is that it tries to make further education for adults easier in several ways. At firms, and especially in the cultural centres run by the trade unions, it arranged for tutors to come and offer advice. These centres employ teachers on the trade union budget to explain and interpret the curriculum to workers outside class-time. They are fully equipped with visual aids and use videos to present television adult education programmes.

These activities characterize the trade union work that tried to assist adult education until the end of the seventies. In the period of social and economic difficulties that followed, when participation in adult education decreased significantly, the trade union had to find new tasks which have since become its main activities.

First and foremost, the trade union is striving to make economic and political leaders realize that adult education and further training do not represent an obstacle to the efficient fulfilment of economic tasks, but are one of its major preconditions. There is a firmly entrenched belief nowadays that the part of national income which goes into accumulation is useful while that which enters consumption is wasted; and since education belongs to the sphere of consumption, it is not sufficiently favoured in the present difficult economic period. The trade unions - and other politicians in the cultural sphere - think that education and training are the principal and best investment and are, especially in an age when scientific and technological progress is gathering speed, necessary conditions for the development of society. For this purpose, the reproduction of individuals' lives has to be promoted - that is to say, the reproduction of labour force on an increasing scale. It is unimaginable that creativity, innovation, and open and flexible thinking should become typical in the production processes without a high and continuously evolving cultural level becoming widespread among the labour force. For this reason education cannot be limited to the task of producing labour force replacement.

Therefore, the trade unions undertake the shaping of social attitudes. This requires - an additional task in the development of adult education - not only good managers in firms, but intelligent men in the upper reaches of trade union administration as well, men who have a clear view of the general approach and are able to present it effectively in discussions.

The trade unions expect that the change in attitudes will establish knowledge and training (primarily specialist training) in a position of greater influence over wages; besides achievement-oriented wages it also wants culture and knowledge that serves the interests of national production to receive acknowledgement in terms of improved income.

If the trade unions succeed in enforcing these two important ideas in social policy, the prestige of adult education may rise and adults may feel that they can benefit individually through education.

Other trade union initiatives are minor, though not insignificant details. Trade unions suggest that the department of public education should re-organize the school system of adult education, should work out new curricula suitable for adults, should organize a special inspectorate, and should provide both modern buildings and suitable salaries for teachers employed in adult education.

There should also be a better co-ordination between adult education, specialist training, further training and general education.

As to the work of the trade unions, active organization has to be continued and supplemented by more efficient methods. However, it must not be overlooked that any change in the administration's view of, and attitude to, adult education is going to proceed only gradually and for trade union officiale working at firms this will pose several conflicts, sometimes even insoluble ones. Therefore the guiding principle in choosing the right means should always be based on a realistic assessment of individual situations.

# INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONS ON THE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF DECLINING ORGANIZATIONS

L. A. Staallekker

## *Introduction*

In consequence of the economic crisis that did not spare the Netherlands either, mergers and the closing down of organizations has been in the day's work. It struck small as well as big concerns. This paper deals with cut-back; following Van Hoorn and Van der Schroeff (1982) this notion is defined as: 'a staggered or gradual shrinking of the capacity of one or several primary or secondary processes of a concern in such a manner that the labour force must forcibly be reduced'.

The process of reorganizing declining organizations can be regarded as a complex decision-making model, wherein various phases may be distinguished. Van Hoorn and Ramondt (1982) discerned:

- a simmering phase: in the literature also named starting phase (Koopman, 1983); during this phase the signals of grave problems increase in number, but it is not year clear where the trouble lies;
- an investigation phase: the problems have become so obvious that the management starts investigating the causes in order to find solutions;
- a decision-making phase: the solution is submitted to those concerned with the reduction; it is attempted to obtain co-operation so that the plans can be executed;
- an execution phase: this phase becomes operative when the plan has been approved with the consent of all or most concerned and ends when all envisaged measures have been accomplished.

In the Netherlands, many authors writing about the cut-back of organizations seek to find the 'governing rules', whereby they consider good, rational planning of great importance. It is endeavoured to arrive at an all-encompassing theory concerning the curtailing process. This has not yet been achieved. This paper deals with an aspect of the process that has not been given sufficient attention in the Netherlands, namely the influence of emotions on the decision-taking process in reorganization cases.

This paper deals only with events during the simmering phase and the beginning of the investigation phase. Most of the authors agree that early signaling of the problems is highly important (Van Hoorn and Van der Schroeff, 1981). The device is to step in as fast as possible. The longer one waits, the more radical measures will have to be taken. In fact, however, it often takes a long time before the gravity of the situation is realized. Therefore I wish to look into the matters that play a role in discerning the problem.

Let us start out from the group dynamic theory regarding decision-making in stress situations of Janis and Mann (1977). I shall briefly handle this theory in the next chapter. Next, I shall discuss the irrational aspects involved in decision-making concerning decline. Attention will also be paid to why *the necessity* of reorganization is not discerned early, why *the causes* underlying the need for reorganization are wrongly perceived, and why *the reaction* to the approaching disaster is inadequate.

Finally, in the last chapter, some suggestions shall be given for a smoother course of decision-making in reorganization processes of declining organizations.

## 1. *The decision-making theory of Janis and Mann*[1]

Janis and Mann observed that in most scientific studies about decision-making, the point of departure is a model based on reason and efficienty comparable to a computer that arrives at a conclusion step by step via seeking strategy and the computing of chances. From daily routine, it appears, however, that human decisions are often based on emotions, subconscious motives, biassed interpretation of information and limited cognitive knowledge. This holds even more with regard to important decisions concerning one's own interest or that of the own organization. Janis and Mann studied a frequent reaction to conflicting choices, namely defensive avoidance.

If someone facing a dreaded situation concludes:

1. that if he does nothing, the consequences will be disastrous,
2. all choices he might make, are coupled with serious risks,
3. he has no hope to find a better solution,

then, in consequence of such a choice conflict he will be subject to great and unpleasant stress, and his behaviour will be directed towards avoiding such stress. In other words, we have a case of defensive avoidance of the choice conflict.

Typical symptoms of defensive avoidance are:

- inadequately seeking for relevant information;
- dealing only with certain salient matters;
- wrongly interpreting the meaning of alarm signals;
- construing wishful rationalizations which minimize the adverse consequences.

Janis and Mann built up their theory on case studies of important political decisions, and tested them in field studies and laboratory experiments. They derived the conclusions that defensive avoidance was a frequent and normal reaction of persons in a conflict of choice that provoked stress.

Within organizations, defensive avoidance may take on three forms of appearance: procrastination, passing the buck, bolstering upon the, at first sight, least unpleasant alternative. Procrastination is chosen when the management thinks to have enough time, for the problems will not become acute shortly. It should be pointed out that procrastination, as described here, is a sign of defensive avoidance. The management may have the conviction that nothing needs yet to be done, but an objective outsider with know-how would be surprised at such 'doing-nothing'. Typical for such situations is that afterwards one would blame oneself for not having interfered sooner.

Passing the buck as an expression of defensive avoidance, is done in cases where the management feels that some other person or group within the organization is involved to an equal extent. For example, they would set up a commission to examine the desirability of a merger, and while waiting quietly for the advice of the commission, the management would do nothing more. If this happens in a situation where it is already clear that a merger is unavoidable and that employees must be fired, we have a case of passing the buck. This may, however, only be stated afterwards, because at the moment the management is convinced it takes the right course.

The last form of defensive avoidance is bolstering on the least unpleasant alternative. This may occur particularly when time presses. In such cases the management might choose a course that, on first sight, entails the least unpleasant consequences in their conviction, and which they do without thorough examination. Through wishful rationalization, the decision is glossed over afterwards, bolstered by arguments to support the choice as the best possible one. This is namely the firm conviction of the decision-makers. Once more, it appears afterwards that the choice was made on the basis of wrongly interpreted facts, and that it was adhered to, because those concerned had an eye only for events which justified their decision. This, then, is a quasi-reasonable decision. In reality, to avoid the anxiety elicited by the choice conflict, they clung to what seemed to be the only solution in the given situation.
Defensive avoidance is a human behavioural pattern. When a group displays defensive avoidance, this is called 'groupthink'. Conditions favouring 'groupthink' are:

- there is a serious problem eliciting great tension, and the group feels that there is no hope to find a better solution than what their leader and other influential members of the group advocate;
- there is a powerful leader who tries to push through his views;
- no systematic procedures for decision-making are employed;
- the group has no contact with outsiders on the problem at hand: everything is top secret and the group is, as it were, secluded on an island;
- there is strong group cohesion.

The characteristics of decision-making under the influence of 'groupthink' are comparable to defensive avoidance, except that in this case one has to do with a collective event. All members of the group are sharing the rationalizations. None questions the procedure followed and the decisions passed. Group members mutually support each other in the conviction that the decision taken is the right one, and they present a common front outwardly. The 'we here, they there' symptom takes over. Above all, the group anticipates antagonistic reactions from outsiders. Potential sources for help and know-how outside the group are insufficiently used. This does not worry the group, for they feel strong together and think to know everything best. They behave as if there is no better solution than the one they have chosen.

Important advantages of the theory of Janis and Mann is that they give hints to make decision-making optimal. Most authors who dealt with the irrationality of decision-making in organizations, indicate the problems as well as the situation they regarded as optimal, without, however, pointing out how it could be achieved (cf. Hedburg and others, 1976). I shall revert to this in the last chapter. In the next chapter the relation between defensive avoidance/'groupthink' and the management's attitude in connection with an impending cut-back will be examined.

### 2. *The irrational aspect of cut-back*

Lately, several authors have been pointing to the irrational functioning of organziations. March (1976) called the various assumptions concerning rational decision-making in organizations merely a matter of faith. This applies, particularly, to organizations where radical changes were to be made. He discerned three manners in which the decisions are taken in such organizations: 1) by mistake, 2) by escape reaction, 3) by solving the problems (see also Van Delden, 1981).

Starbuck *et al.* (1978) also dealt with the irrational aspect. Based on a study, they came to the conclusion that those organizations which stick firmly to matters like rationality, logical consistency, hierarchic control and planning, sooner or later get into trouble. These principles are indeed of great importance, but one must have an eye for other aspects as well. For sure, organizations have also to do with a lot of irrationality, inconsistence, instability, spontaneousness, and inefficiency. These, too, are valuable, for they make a clear perception possible, they counter self-sufficiency, induce to experimentation and make changes possible (cf. Peters and Waterman, 1982).

What has been described above for organizations holds also for the manager. Gottschall (1983) opened his article as follows: *'Je intuitiver ein Manager seine Aufgabe herangeht, desto grösser sind seine Aussichten auf Erfolg, je rationeler er handelt, desto dürftiger wird das Ergebnis sein'*.

Also Kets de Vries (1982) doubted that the average manager was a rational decision-maker. According to him, the behaviour of the manager is determined rather more by matters such as the phase of life in which he finds himself, his stability in a crisis situation, or his - often neurotic - personality structure, etc.

Irrationality seems to be built in persons and organizations. This alone gives no problem. The difficulties arise only when it is disregarded and in theorizing over decision-taking in crisis situations, the only attitude adopted is logical consistency.

Then, invariably it appears that the facts do not comply with the model envisaged and exceptions make the rule.

This conclusion supports the significance of the theory of Janis and Mann (1977). The decision-making theory developed by them takes into account the influences of emotions on the rational functioning of men. Defensive avoidance of stress has a major role in their theory. It is to be expected that it should have an important part in the opinion-forming and decision-making concerning a cut-down. Certainly, curtailment has an ominous portent. The survival of the enterprise is at stake, all alternative solutions have serious risks attached and are fraught with numerous problems, and often there is no hope for an ideal solution. In such situations, Janis and Mann stated that managers were more inclined to avoid the unpleasant stress elicited by the problem, than to seek for the most adequate solution.

To examine the role of defensive avoidance in the decision-making of the management in reorganization processes, I shall go into the following aspects:

- discerning the necessity to cut back;
- perception of the causes leading to reorganization;
- reactions of the management to an imminent cut-back.

### *2.1 Discerning the necessity to cut back*

According to Koopman (1983) it often takes a very long time before it is realized that something is wrong, and before it is decided to examine matters thoroughly. He quoted Bruil *et al.* (1976), who mentioned a period of 11 to 22 months, and Drijver *et al.* (1979), who estimated the time lag to be even more, 1 to 5 years.

Apparently, it is not easy to admit that the situation is grave. Van Hoorn (1981) hinted at where the reason for this should be looked for: 'Decision to cut back means for most concerned a great emotional barrier. Such a decision requires a certain time to ripen'.

Starbuck *et al.* (1978) observed that many observations show the following symptoms when they find themselves facing an imminant cut-back:

- the first signals intimating a crisis are ignored;
- when after a while the signals are admitted, the need for taking action is underestimated;
- organizations adhere more firmly to procedures that have led to success in the past, even though they no longer fit the current situation;
- it is attempted to explain the crisis away by reasoning.

All these points lead to managers' failing to react to crises, or doing so too late. Bearing in mind the theory of Janis and Mann, it is not surprising that managers 'fail to discern the necessity of a cut-back'. The above attitudes reveal 'procrastination', a kind of defensive avoidance of stress, connected with decision-making concerning curtailment.

More light on the process is thrown by Janis and Mann when they discuss the increase of stress. They state that the stress level of decision makers is connected with binding with their habitual way of acting. The stronger the binding, the greater the stress caused by a decision, demanding a change in their routine.

Whetten (1981) pointed to the 'success leads to failure'-syndrome. Behaviour that has led to success in the past, becomes automatic and anchored in the person. In a crisis situation, the routine behaviour is no longer adequate. This entails added stress for the managers in reorganization situations, and as a result the chances of defensive avoidance in reaction to the stress increase.

Failure to signal situations where a cut-back is necessary is a frequent phenomenon, and yet it is most important that an oncoming crisis should be early discerned. Van Hoorn (1981) attached in this respect great importance to portfolio analyses. Besides, he recommended that managements in reorganization situations adopt a wise, cautious, and strategic attitude. In another paper jointly with Ramondt (Van Hoorn and Ramondt, 1982), they stated that apparently, at least to date, prevention is most difficult. In their book *'Als sanering dreigt ...'* (When reorganization is imminent ...), Van Hoorn and Van der Schroeff (1982) give a reason for this: 'It is, alas, a fact that for the time being the idea of a diagnostic and preventive study is not highly related in the business world in the Netherlands'. All these publications agree that a solution should be sought in further developing the economic instruments of diagnosis. I think, however, that this would be insufficient. It seems that technical instruments of diagnosis and prevention have but a limited practical use. How sophisticated such instruments may be, they are useless if they are not employed or if the results are misinterpreted. And this is precisely what would happen if defensive avoidance came into play.

## *2.2 Perception of the causes leading to reorganization*

In the 1970's a world-wide economic recession set in. It is often attributed to this that business concerns got into difficulties. Van Hoorn and Van der Schroeff (1982) enumerated 12 causes leading to reorganization. Not more than one of them concerned the individual enterprise, to wit, the functioning of the management. They affirmed that managing an organization was difficult in times like that. In this context they pointed to the inadequate training of managers, without going further into the matter; thus the reader gets the impression that the reason for organizations getting into trouble, must be sought in external factors, such as the stagnation of European integration, problems round the balance of payments on a nation-wide scale, and excessibe labour costs. Although there is truth in this, in the last few years a growing number of reports was published indicating that in the face of the general depression, there are enterprises that grow and prosper (Ouchi, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Pascale and Athos, 1982). In all these publications, success is attributed to sound management and conversely, the failure of an enterprise to poor management. There if plenty of proof supporting this view. In a paper, Bakker *et al.* (1983), entitled *'Succesvol ondernemen'*

('Successful enterprise'), based on a study in six succesful enterprises, endeavoures to reveal the background of success. All factors listed contributing to the success, pertained to internal organization. Strikingly, in all enterprises success was preceded by a change in management. Management seems to determine the degree of success of the enterprise. It is understandable that changes in managements are the immediate cause of success if we think of the above-mentioned 'success leads to failure'-syndrome. Starbuck *et al.* (1978), give the following reasoning: When organizations notice that certain activities lead to success, they adopt them as standard procedures, anchored in the organization. This renders the organization less alert to signals from the environment. A recession is regarded as a temporary problem due to passing external factors.

It goes without saying that external factors usually play a part in the difficulties of an organization, the point in question is just how the management interplays in response to the problems. It is therefore not for nothing that success is often preceded by a change of management. Starbuck *et al.* (1978) correctly observed that partial renewal of a management often does not lead to changes, because the newcomer is admitted in a group governed by strong cohesion, so that his influence is curbed.

This conclusion is in agreement with Bakker *et al.* (1983), who stated that management changes preceding a boom were so radical that the 'old' strategies of the enterprise were shortly thrown overboard and replaced by new ones. The management of a threatened organization runs the risk of committing two sorts of perception faults (see Abernathy, 1982):

1. to believe that the cause underlying the problem is due to circumstances beyond the influence of the organization, and that it has nothing to do with their own functioning;
2. to think that the problems are transient and can be attributed to temporary circumstances outside the organization.

According to the theory of Janis and Mann, such one-sided perception is due to 'groupthink'. In case of 'groupthink', the cause of the problems is always sought in others. Sometimes individual members of the group may have doubts about the solutions taken, but they fail to bring them forward. In the group, only such arguments are proposed and accepted that support the ruling standpoint.

One has to do with 'groupthink' - as we have seen before - when a group is faced with a portentous situation, and strong cohesion within the group as well as directive leadership are ruling. Moreover, the group presents a solid front outward, and avoids open communication with others who think differently. This is typical for the situation in which a management finds itself under the pressure of imminent cut-back (see Starbuck *et al.*, 1978).

### 2.3 *Reactions of the management to an imminent cut-back*

Reactions to the portent of a cut-back are often inadequate. As already stated, the management is often late to grasp the gravity of the situation, and does not clearly perceive its reasons. The consequence is belated reaction. When they decide to take steps, the solutions proposed leave often much to be desired. Breuer (1974) remarked in this respect: 'The seemingly rational decision-making process is in vivid contrast with the factual immaturity of the constructive alternatives considered and the minimal effect of the expected consequences of the proposed measures'.

Other authors also observed that the gathering of information was inadequate. Van Dijk (1982) stated that there arose tension between the right decisions desirable and the available time. Moreover, he observed that decision-taking was far from objective, because the priorities mapped out remained obscure. Van Hoorn and Van der Schroeff (1982) maintained that information was chiefly collected by the management: it decided what information was relevant and how it must be acquired and analyzed. In a later phase of the reorganization process, this is bound to lead to problems (Van Hoorn and Ramondt, 1982). All this is in perfect agreement with the theory of Janis and Mann.

In the event 'groupthink' and the avoidance of stress play the main part, the gathering of information will be incomplete and decision-making will be based on rationalization. The - on first sight - least unpleasant of the available alternatives will be chosen, furthermore all effort will be spent on finding information apt to support their choice. Alarm signals will be disregarded or misinterpreted. The conviction of pursuing the least unpleasant solution will diminish anxiety.

In conclusion it may be stated that the deficient gathering of information concerning the reorganization, the subjective interpretation of the material, the qualitatively inadequate solutions, and minimal study of the consequences to be expected, are a logical sequel to the defensive avoidance of the choice conflict and the attached stress.

## 3. *Towards a better decision-making in the case of cut-backs*

We have already seen that often the gravity of the cut-back situation is not perceived, that the management has a biased perception of the problems, and that in many cases the solution envisages is inadequate. Where this is due to defensive avoidance/'groupthink', it is possible to develop various techniques for alarming, and instruments for prevention, but these means will not be employed or will be wrongly used.

The technical means can only be correctly used on the condition that human decision-making is optimalized. Hedburg *et al.* (1976) found that optimal decision-making in an organization is subject to certain conditions regarding satisfaction, financial position, confidence, consistency, and rationality. All of these conditions must be met at a certain minimum level. The authors mention purposely about a minimum to indicate that striving for 'less' where possible, is a positive matter. They extensively enter into the harmful effects of too much of a good thing. The paper does not, however, define where the optimal minimum lies, nor does it tell what steps should be taken to arrive at the minimum level.

Janis (1974), on his part, does give a number of specific directives for improving decision-making in organisations and to neutralize 'groupthink'. Below, a summary of his suggestions is given in eight points. I shall not discuss the prevention of depensive avoidance of individual persons, for this paper deals with decision-making in cut-back situations, and this is usually done by a group, in our case the management.

Janis (1974) lists a number of means to prevent 'groupthink'. The main points are the following:

1. The leader of the group must assume the role of stimulating the members to bring forward divergent opinions and objections. Hence, the leader must be capable of enduring criticism on his own views and must even encourage it.

2. In the opening phase, the leader should not present his own views, but should rather put forward all aspects of the problem as clearly as possible. This should not be a mere trick. A leader who knows precisely what he wants, and only feigns standing open to the views of others, will achieve nothing, for the members of the group will surmise that the decision has already been taken, and shall do their best to say that which falls into fertile ground.

3. It is advisable to work on the same subject in subgroups, so that differences come clearly to light.

4. Each group member should have the opportunity to discuss the matter under deliberation with some confidential persons outside the group, and to bring their reaction into the group.

5. Independent experts should be consulted, and encouraged to point out possible blinds spots to those who have adopted clear-cut opinions.

6. During the discussion of the various alternatives, resulting from the study, a member of the group should be charged with the task of playing 'the devil's advocate'.

7. The analysis of alarm signals and the spotting of stereotype notions should be given ample time.

8. After the first consensus has been reached concerning the best solution, each participant should be encouraged to clearly express any doubts he might still have.

It seems objectionable that this process is rather time-consuming. Strictly speaking, the contention that it is an intensive event that, naturally, requires ample time, is correct. On the other hand, if a group does not work in this manner, there is a very real chance of 'groupthink' coming into play, and nothing or the wrong thing will be accomplished. In both cases, the damage is greater than what a lengthy decision-taking process might cost.

Some managements will (in part) recognize themselves in the above described decision-making process of Janis. In reports on successful enterprises, it is striking that in every instance much attention is given to the decision-making process, and that new/different ideas are welcome (Peters *et al.*, 1982; Ouchi, 1982; Pascale and Athos. 1982). Managements that do not operate in this manner, would be wise to learn this and to follow a training course in decision-making. This is, however, not a magic model where it is enough to follow the steps from a to z in order to arrive at the correct conclusion. The point is to have an eye for the own functioning as well as for the functioning of the group, and to learn that granting doubt and anxiety would only benefit the decision-making. It is better to manifest anxiety than to suppress it by not realizing the gravity of the situation, or to make a random choice from several solutions and subsequently make an effort to glossing over the choice.

Anxiety, irrationality, emotion, and uncertainly are normal human attributes to which, for example, high positive value is attached in Japanese management (Pascale and Athos, 1982). They become noxious only if negated and if we behave like a computer that can infallibly take the right decision. It would then invariably appear that what we rationally think to be the right decision is, in fact, a fault one, based on the avoidance of the choice conflict and the stress attached to it.

### *Note*

1. This paragraph is based on I.L. Janis and L. Mann, *Decision making*. The Free Press, New York, 1977.

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# ELEMENTS OF RENEWAL IN HUNGARIAN PUBLIC EDUCATION OF THE PAST TEN YEARS

János Tóth

Nobody today would doubt that public education in Hungary, like the whole of society, is in need of a profound renewal. Thus the following treatment of this topic is no mere product of fashion but has arisen out of a commitment to the future.
From our viewpoint of a sociology of culture the category that comes closest to innovation is the very fashionable concept of "creativity" which, however, is limited in its use. Its frame of reference is confined to psychology, it has an aesthetic tendency and it does not go beyond the viewpoint of the individual and the small group. The concept of innovation first gained currency in connection with economic production. Using Schumpeter's five cases, we can speak of innovation when some new product, new technology, new supply and marketing opportunity or new organizational position is created.[1]

Attempts are being made to develop the analysis of innovation in further domains of social life, which indicates the growing special importance of innovation. Since the field is neither definite nor precisely measurable, and has not been explored in any way empirically, all we can offer is a sketch of possible research based on a systematization of the tendencies of the past decade. Popular culture, or adult education, is a subsystem of the whole of society that is made up of certain institutions, and an activity comprising a particular set of the functions of society. A subsystem, a partial function, of society, in short.

We shall consider the innovational phenomena in popular culture, or adult education, in terms of two questions:

1) What innovational tendencies are there in the whole of social and economic processes which affect the subsystem and partial function of adult education?
2) Given the principle of mutual influence, what are the innovation processes, if any, emerging within the activity of adult education itself which, on a larger scale, further or hinder the potentials of renewal of the whole of society.

*Factors hindering or furthering a general renewal of society*

It is no mere chance that since the beginning of the decade, the expressions ***modernization, making up for delays, renewal of society, general reform of society*** and *forced path** have all gained prominance. Relaying on the most important studies on the subject,[2] I have gleaned four basic factors from the determinants of inventional processes, and they are:

a) Factors of structural-historical origin, of which b) is an example;
b) lack of articulation and relative independence;
c) communication deficiency as a functional disturbance and the consequences it has for;
d) prestige, value and consciousness conditions.

Re a *The historical and structural factors*

Whenever Hungarian historians speak of delayed development and modernization, they take the development of Western society as a model and frame of reference, and view the development of Hungarian society as one of its variants, the existing social structure of which they consider as the consequence and result of historical development. The theory which is the most comprehensive and has aroused the greatest interest, is based on the formula of a process in three phases according to which the Hungarian people had formed a social structure of the Western type from 1000 to 1500 A.D. That period, however, was followed by a series of historical catastrophes which drove Hungarian society out of that position, and forced it into a structure of the East European type. Possibilities to return to the Western road of development were created after World War II, but remained unrealized. Even the series of changes and the lack of balance, characteristic of Hungarian history in the early modern times, have not been able to completely remove the 'Western' elements of a structure which had existed for several centuries.[3] Another theory distinguishes two types of modernization of traditional societies: one starts from within and the elimination of traditionalism provides the social basis for an intrinsic development, whereas the other comes from outside and the elimination of traditionalism destroys the conditions of an autonomous development as well. These two extremes exist only in theory, of course.

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* The author using this expression to describe the development of Hungarian society explains that, except for the German *Zwangslaufbahn* which is relatively close to the Hungarian original, the compound form is almost unknown in common usage, which he takes as a sign of its having a special Mid-Eastern European 'content'. The English translate it with 'forced path', the French with 'cours forcé', and the Russians with 'prinuditelnaya trassa' (cf. notes, Elemér Hankiss).

The latest development of Hungarian society is described in works of sociology of history as one for which the mechanical taking over of an alien model has been a considerable burden.[4] There are a number of other basic factors which contribute to the strengthening inertia of Hungarian history on its forced path. They are in brief:[5]

1) Our peripheral and subordinate position in the system of world economy. We have no suitable strategy for controlling increasing backwardness.
2) In the new phase of development our nationalized and centralized planned economy is unable to mobilize available resources, economic efficiency remains at a low level.
3) Economic and social institutions are rigid and adapt slowly to changing conditions.

4) Relatively neglected infrastructure both in the field of blue-collar and white-collar work.

5) Overcentralization obstructs 'socialization', the switch-over to autonomous and independent society.

6) Under the conditions of a shortage economy the dominance of positions and the network of personal relations suppress the principle of achievement and maintain contraselection, protectionism and corruption which hinder the formation of a social consciousness.

7) There is a low level of political education, people consider themselves subordinate, and there is little consciousness of autonomy as characterizes the bourgeois personality.

I have expressed these burdens in a pointed manner here, because I think that after a shorter, apparently convergent cycle, a new divergent developmental process of historical significance has enfolded in which we continue along the path of traditional industrialisation, while developed industrial civilization is already switching over to the path of a second industrial revolution. For this reason I think we cannot accept the view that in a more narrow frame of reference - i.e. if we take the path of development of the small countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a standard - Hungarian society can claim to have achieved relative results in terms of overcentralization, material wealth, a less rigid network of institutions, elements of Western civilization and mobilization of human resources.

### Re b *The lack of articulation in the subsystems of society*

A further basic characteristic of the structural divergence from the Western model originating in history, is the *unhealthy primacy of politics in modernization*, and in the whole society in general. If we take two elements of the social spheres and subsystems as important as the political system and the economic system, then one of the characteristic features of the specific developments of the Hungarian socialist political system is a one-way relation between politics and economy.[6] In other words, the decision-making process has been completely built up only from politics towards economy, and in a very small degree in the other direction. Nevertheless, the most progressive forms of articulation, of relative autonomy, and of mutual influence have been created in the spheres of politics and economy during the last 15 years, in which the new economic mechanism has been tried out. The favourable influences accumulated there spread on to other social spheres. This, however, was a process loaded with contradictions because demands for economic changes are typically formulated politically with considerable delay (when the old method becomes drastically unsuitable). The other problem is that what the pressure of the difficulties achieves is the pragmatically motivated and provisional acceptance of a line of action which had been considered unacceptable before.[7] Thus one of the most important conclusions to be drawn from the experience of this period of reform in economic administration is the need for reform comprising more than the economy, i.e., for related political, social, and institutional reforms and the need to realize them jointly, as had, in fact, been an idea raised in the 1968 Reform Bill.[8]

### Re c *Communication deficiencies and functional disturbance*

One of the most important forms in which the abovementioned reactions manifest themselves is communication. The extent to which social changes are perceived, and the need for them, depends on the working of the existing channels of information. Feedback and even the mere entry of information into the political system is influenced by interests coloured with political motives. Besides the deficiencies in modern communication infrastructure this functional disturbance, too, makes it difficult for decentralized and active public opinion to form, and for a possible majority of adherents of renewal to come forward and articulate their position.

### Re d *Prestige, value and consciousness conditions*

Since this topic will be dealt with in more detail later on in my paper, here I limit myself to a sketch of the major problems. One of the most important recent developments has been the increasing prominance of 'work after work', and of an income and consumption-oriented approach as far as values are concerned.

Nobody doubts the unfavourable aspects of this social phenomenon, yet a few things can be said in its favour: it is the only real chance for individual mobility, and the dominant value of consumption will probably be weakened as soon as possession of elementary conditions of civilization, i.e. consumers' durables, becomes sufficiently widespread. Besides being a major source of further income, 'work after work' is also a field in which demands for rational work organization, and autonomous self-realization can be fulfilled. One of the greatest drawbacks of the phenomenon, however, is that in recent decades the undermining of traditional, emotional-collective values has opened up the way for a negative modernization, and empty individualization.[9] Another major problem from the viewpoint of innovation is the fact that competence (especially that of professional learning skills) still rates very low in prestige.[10]

## *II The contradictory effects of renewal in adult education*

It stands to reason that the better the general conditions for social innovation, the stronger the favourable mutual influences become between the different sectors and the more likely the subsystem of adult education is to have a series of favourable effects on other spheres of society. However, in order to be able to record some experiences of the past decade, we have to answer the question: *what is the function of adult education in the process of social-economic renewal?*

Adult education points to desires, human creative power, and tendencies emerging in society; it makes them conscious, assists and shapes them, and does all this in the form of viewpoints. *Weltanschauung*, mentality, social consciousness, knowledge and culture.

Three major elements of the fulfilling of the function can be specified:

a) Adult education gives the people an opportunity to let thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc. out, to express themselves, thereby making those skills, values and knowledge which are important to renewal accessible, and learnable for increasing masses.

b) A well-functioning institutional network is an indispensable organ of social life. It is a special network with a tissue-quality within the infrastructure, and functions as a background of every-day intellectual life which continuously reproduces the active energies of society and keeps intellectual resources in constant readineaa, which enables occasional dynamic steps forward.

c) The organization of adult education can form social networks which serve as a centre, a point of departure, for the powers and prime movers of social renewal.

On the basis of these functions we can briefly state that in the past decade the rudimentary and ambiguous character of the general renewal processes of society has merely succeeded in reducing some of the bureaucratic and conservative elements in adult education; it has not brought about any structural change whatsoever. Similarly, adult education has been a passive recipient of changes, consuming its organic reserves and has been able to react upon them only to an insignificant extent. From the point of view of institutionalized and conservative adult education, we cannot speak of a complete crisis, because even when relegated to the periphery of the social sectors there has been a certain amount of quantitative growth in activities, financial support, and the furthering of certain kinds of activity. If, however, we view this in terms of pre-conditions for renewal, there have been obvious, though unintentional, changes. Thus, for instance, a revaluation of demands and needs and their accumulation outside the institutional network on the one hand, and the accumulation of powerlessness within the institutional network on the other hand, have occurred without a complete distress in balance between the two. One reason for this is that the changing system of values and needs mistrustfully restrains itself from official acceptance and furthermore can still find satisfactory forms of realization and possibilities outside the institutional network. The other reason is that the toleration of spontaneous movements on a small scale is considered a strategy rather than mere impotence on the part of the institutional network. However, its tendency to legalize and integrate certain endeavours and manifestations does not form part of a comprehensive plan directed at some definite goal. For an itemized account we can draw up the following list of important developments:

- Even in spite of its contradictory development, economic activity has widened the domain of opportunities for the satisfaction of real socio-cultural needs; it has made the function of adult education more rational and evident, and also it has effected a shift away from the clumsy and rigid institutional system.
- Privatization, as a negative reaction to forced bureaucratic collectivity, and the desire for traditional companionship, and the traditional system of values have become stronger. The preference for organic collectives instead of artificially enforced organizations has increased; so have preferences for the rehabilitation of historical traditions, and organization forms, for cultural activity as a social enterprise and for working opportunities offering supportive services. Thus, interest in the nationhood, the family, folk art, folklore, and corporative and self-governing life has increased; so has the importance attached to ecological thinking and mental hygiene.
- The political resolution concerning public education says that, in principle, the function of adult educational activity is to fulfil social tasks, and to act as a means towards developing social democratism (1974). Since the institutions have proved unable to carry out this all too general and normative programme, the rationalization processes

referred to above have lead to the widespread adoption of the view that, unless it is practically useful, there is no point in becoming educated. The general slowing down of democratization in this sphere, has lead to the emergence of an informal system of 'democracy', in which autonomy, the voluntary principle, and value pluralism have become tacitly acknowledged values. This entails stagnation, occasionally even decreasing participation in official programmes offered in adult education. The Ministry of Culture reacted by an increased development of mass-entertainment and mass-communication.

- The scientific studies prompted by the ten year old political resolution of 1974 have offered a more objective analysis of the social context of cultural life, which has had an effect on certain elements of administration, training, and institutions. A theoretical development of fundamental importance, the anthropological as against the earlier paternalistic enlightening attitude to culture, has been accepted more widely. The practical initiatives that have resulted in the 'horizontal islands', have not formed a growing and unified chain and so have had essentially no effect upon the vertical network of cultural organizations. It was largely under economic pressure that the overcentralized and bureaucratic administration has made certain forms of financial support and budget management more flexible

For lack of empirical research findings and time, I cannot prove the value judgements I have tried to expound in a systematic way. However, my aim was only to raise ideas for further consideration, which, although not expounded in detail, do contain elements of a cultural strategy aimed at social renewal.

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8. Indications to that effect are the decisions and political programmes containing further reforms of the public administration and the political system. Of special importance are the reform of the organization of firm management, the new voting reform and the planned measures aimed at democratizing public administration.
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# A VILLAGE EXPERIMENT IN HUNGARY (SIÓMENTE EXPERIMENT)

Csaba Varga

Two years ago a complex and intensive *village experiment* was started in the North-east of Somogy county in four villages situated on both sides of the river Sió: in Balatonszabadi, Siómaros, Siójut and Ádánd. The territory is called Siómente. The experiment is, essentially, a functional and value-oriented development of territory and community aimed at starting an organic, qualitative development in all four settlements.

## 1. *Principles, logic and conditions of the village experiment*

a) The categories of organic versus inorganic development can be applied to interpret the Hungarian development. We generally speak of ***organic decelopment***, when society builds upon its past while simultaneously meeting the challenges of the future. It is a typically East-European situation that it is still inorganic processes that seem organic, while organic elements seem inorganic.

b) Hungarian ***settlement structure***, too, has continued to develop inorganically for the past decades. The development of villages has been lagging behind in comparison to that of towns. Thus, inhabitants, especially of small and mediocre villages, often found themselves in a position of accumulated disadvantages.

c) ***Organic*** development means for a settlement that individuals ***identify*** with their position and voluteer to help develop their settlement. This has occured so far only to a limited extent.

[redacted]

Recent history was characterized by a cramping of individuals' inner wishes by external pressure - especially in the 1950's - and these external inhibitions have become internalized. Hence there is little readiness for regional development.

d) The *decentralization* of Hungarian society has stopped at the level of professional arbiters of settlements so that the local society of villages is usually in a state of disintegration, and a considerable distance, separates local leadership and the population.

e) Thus it is true also of the four settlements on either side of the Sió, that there is no harmony between past and present, or between economy, society and culture. People do not feel at home in the settlement and therefore do not behave like owners, and do not believe that the future of the settlement also depends upon them. Economic development and the gradual rise in the standard of living, do not motivate them to improve local social and human relations.

f) It is possible to reconstruct the traditional Hungarian way of "thinking in terms of a people and nation", to neutralize it, while at the same time developing it in such a way as will lead to thinking in European terms, but will root it organically in local communal thinking in village - or town - terms.

g) It is a topical question whether a central reform process, still overcentralized, should be carried on in coming decades or - as I suggest - we should start hundreds of *local* reforms which will certainly reinforce each other in spite of the variety of kind. If we count on the activity of individuals and their communities, the only worthwhile reforms are comprehensive and intensive ones at a local level. If it begins in a year or two, the Siómente experiment could act as a model.

h) If a comprehensive renovation of society is constructed from a variety of local reforms, the question arises how the centre of society is supposed to assist the process. For local everyday culture cannot be renewed without organic interaction with autonomous or high culture. Thus central assistance should not be confined to financial support or to organizing agreement on local reforms, but should include the *democratic* offering of the new culture produced by the leading intellectuals of Hungary in the past ten or fifteen years.

i) If the basic point of local reforms is - besides the formulation of regional development alternatives and the launching of the chosen strategy of development - a value-oriented *development of culture*, drawing on local popular culture as well as new values of high culture, then the very concept of culture needs to be constantly re-interpreted. Culture, I think, not only expresses and interprets society, but also at its best activates it, or (as is often the case nowadays), regulates it in a manipulative way. Culture is after all, the quality of society, the quality of individuals, communities, and actions.

j) Knowing the handicapped position of villages and local societies and being aware of the latent or explicit individual or communal desire for autonomy, it seems historically realistic that in the 1980's we should start local reforms which will raise the level of individual freedom, the reconstruction and the rehabilitation of local societies, and will increase the capacity of the socialist state for renewal.

k) Viewed from the point of view of socio-cultural animation, local reform is not only the propagation of certain values or the providing of information or the renewing of local communication and the re-invigorating of local cultural life; it is also the expert development of a set of conditions - in co-operation with local society - which will provide the framework for local inhabitants to freely re-organize *their own culture*, to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of their lives. Thus the task of socio-cultural animation is to assist the preparation of local reforms and to assist continuously in the guidance and local control of reform efforts.

## 2. *A Short Description of the Siómente Experiment*

The two years of experiences gained from this village reform along could fill a book. All we can undertake here, is to sketch the ***ten*** most important points (parts of the reform) involved in this social experiment.

a) The most powerful economic unit in the district is the co-operative farm owning the land of these four villages.This highly developed co-operative working at a European level, wants to regenerate itself through an internal economic-organizational decentralization and thus encourage its units to be more innovative and economical. Furthermore, it is now making a conscious effort to tend the cultural and communal reconstruction of the four villages and their inhabitants. One reason for this is that in the district it is the focus of power, resources and morale.

b) The village experiment initiated by the co-operative farm can only achieve even partial success if the inhabitants of the four villages (not only those who are members of the co-operation), are able and willing to manage their affairs alone and to systematically reconstruct local society, even if it takes several decades. Therefore, in three of the four villages *cultural associations* which were formed, are now beginning to act as organizers of the local reforms through a growing awareness of their own interests. In this way, institutional workshops of local communal autonomy that were developed, may be the agents of settlement and cultural development. In addition, old small cultural communities gain new strength and new ones are formed, e.g. folk song choirs and folk artist working groups.

c) A continuous *school and education reform* has to be started in the primary schools which are in a disadvantageous position. The first school reform in this district was started at the primary school in Balatonszabadi (and at those in Maros and Jut, which come under it). The first step of the reform was a one-year intensive refresher course for the staff. After that, the teachers themselves decided what reforms they were going to start with, in the first couple of years. In the second phase - which is beginning now - a 'work school' will be organized and in the junior section a complete renovation will be undertaken, involving liberalization of the usual curricula.

d) Alongside the planning of the school experiment the *folk high school* was reformed for the first time in almost 40 years. It is jointly run by the cultural associations and the co-operative farm. Its courses are for three years: in the first year students attend 'folk high school weekends', in the second they study at the high school's college, and in the third they attend special folk academy courses. Five subjects are dealt with in the college: history, social studies, personality theory, art studies, and natural studies. Students are also given practical training, preparing them for individual and community activities. The purpose of the folk high school is to develop one's personality, to increase knowledge of the village and the society, and to provide practical preparation for the local reform.

e) The reconstruction of traditional *village centres* will initiated in each of the four settlements. At the moment the planning and preparation of capital-intensive investment is at present going on in Szabadi. One of the groups has its *village centre* ready; another one is just rebuilding its old one, and the third group is planning one. These *village centres* serve as cultural centres, libraries, and museums. Parallel to the development of these centres, state cultural institutions are also being extended and regenerated, e.g., the community centre in Szabadi, where extensions of 4 to 6 classrooms are being planned;

in Maros the old community centre has been refurbished as a gymnasium, and three classrooms. A reform of the activities undertaken by such bodies is also being planned.

f) New housing estates will be constructed in the villages to handle the growth of the population. Plans for a modern village district near the Dózsa-manor are ready, while plans for a similar, although smaller, village district are in hand. The structure of the new village district of Szabadi is similar to that of medieval Hungarian villages of the Árpád period, and all the homes have been individually planned by distinguished architects. Besides a common aesthetic quality, each home will have a large interior area (formerly with the fireplace as its focus), where the family can be together.

g) Emotionally and intellectually (and in terms of identity), the most disadvantageously placed are *teenagers* and adolescents between ten and twenty years. With this in mind we have organized a two-week residential *training camp*, starting in November 1984, to which we intend to invite forty or so young agriculturally and industrially skilled workers. The reading camp aims at the development of personality and community; its purposes include the broadening of self-understanding and of social knowledge.

h) Local communication within and between villages and local *public life*, has been developed by turning the co-operative's own news bulletin into a local paper for the four villages, under the name 'Sióмente'. Local public life is certain to be further improved by the nationwide reform of public administration of 1985, which may boost the self-government of regional towns and settlements. This may also improve the formulation and discussion of alternatives for village development. If cable television is introduced in Siófok, local television may also be installed in Szabadi, in the first or second phase.

i) One should not forget about reconstruction and development of the local awareness of the *historical past and of the present*. Bearing this in mind, a historical memorial park will be developed in the near future around the fortified church unearthed a short time ago. Each village would like a *village museum*: that of Siómaros will be the first to be completed. An extensive sociographic study has been carried out on Balatonszabadi and Siómaros, and will be published next year.

j) The organization and administration of the experiment may serve as a model in several ways:

- in terms of the constant moral support given by national and county organizations, and by professional centres, especially the Institute for Adult Education - which initiated the experiment, the collaborating National Pedagogical Institute, the National Council of Co-operative Farms, and the National Council of the Patriotic Popular Front: the county council has given both financial and moral support;
- locally, for the reason that the village experiment has been managed by the co-operative farm - an unusual occurrence - in perfect harmony with local party organs, councils and Popular Front Committees;
- and finally, because institutions of local self-organization have been set up, such as cultural associations, the folk high school, or the council of cultural circles co-ordinating the associatons.

It is to be hoped that in a few years' time the results and failures of the Siómente experiment will yield evidence that may serve as a foundation for an assessment with regard to the innovative efforts of Hungarian village society and with respect to the part played by adult education in that process.

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